■ Lifestyle / CI
Mariah Carey's sizzling surprise at MTV Awards

■ Across / A18
'Hell ship' victims remembered in Subic

■ Sports / A25
RP gets bonus 49th gold in SEAG

■ Business / B10
Shoemakers closing shop due to imports

■ Business / B10
Effective marketing does it for Baguio

Gov't to pursue talks despite NPA attacks

By Christian V. Esguerra

DESPITE a wave of deadly rebel attacks, including an ambush that killed nine policemen in Masbate, Malacañang yesterday said the government would continue peace talks with communist guerrillas.

The communist-led National Democratic

GOV'T/A10

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

GMA has P5B, FPJ ²2B for campaign, says ?oco

By Michael Lim Ubac

DAVAO CITY—Raul Roco yest rday said the projected campaign costs of h s rivals in the presidential race—supposedly P5 billion for President Macapagal-Arroyo a d P2 billion for Fernando Poe Jr.—w re "unconscionable."

GMA HAS/ A21

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph   Wednesday, February 18, 2004 ★★ 50 pages / 4 sections / vol. 19 / no. 72   P18   webs e: www.inq7.net

Erap's justice secretary says FPJ not a natural-born Filipino

By Philip C. Tubeza and Carlito Pablo

THE OPINION of an Iglesia ni Cristo legal luminary who had served as justice secretary during the administration of deposed President Joseph Estrada is bolstering the position of lawyers seeking to disqualify actor Fernando Poe Jr. from the presidential race.

Former Justice Secretary Artemio Tuquero said Poe could be disqualified because the actor was born an illegitimate child and thus not a natural-born Filipino citizen.

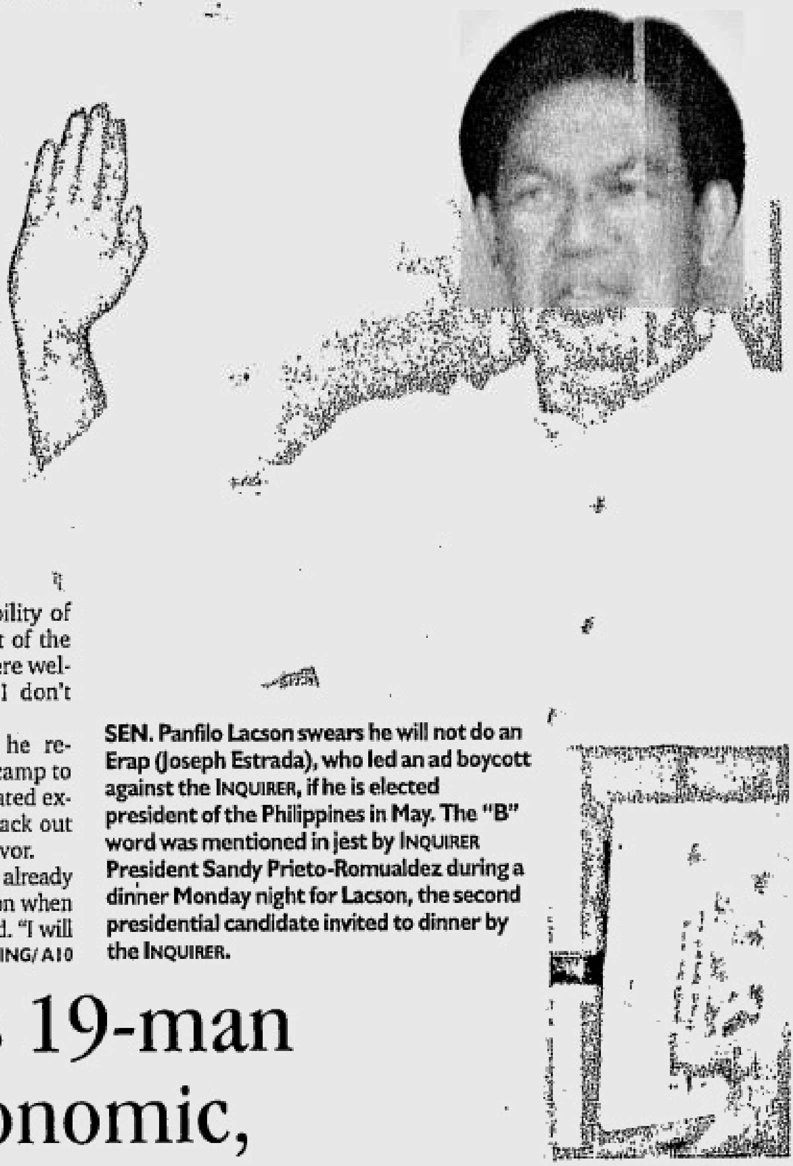
The Office of the Solicitor General also threw its support behind the disqualification petition against Poe.

In a 20-page comment he submitted to the Supreme Court yesterday, Solicitor General Alfredo Benipayo concurred with the proponents of Poe's disqualification that the Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino standard-bearer was not a natural-born Filipino, and hence is barred by the 1987 Constitution from running for president.

"As an illegitimate child, FPJ followed the citizenship of his (American mother), the only known parent at birth. He cannot invoke (the 1935 Constitution), which provides that 'those whose fathers are citizens of the Philippines' are ?ilipino citizens. This provisi n, according to the Supreme Cc ırt in Morano vs Vivo, covers o: ly legitimate children," said Tu uero, dean of the Manuel L. Qu zon University law school.

ERAP'S/ A22

Ping: All I need is FPJ's blessing



SEN. Panfilo Lacson swears he will not do an Erap (Joseph Estrada), who led an ad boycott against the INQUIRER, if he is elected president of the Philippines in May. The "B" word was mentioned in jest by INQUIRER President Sandy Prieto-Romualdez during a dinner Monday night for Lacson, the second presidential candidate invited to dinner by the INQUIRER.

RUDY ESPERAS

Lacson ready for Poe disqualification

By Norman Bordadora and Christian V. Esguerra

ALL THAT Sen. Panfilo Lacson would need is Fernando Poe Jr.'s endorsement to lead a united opposition in the event the actor is disqualified from seeking the presidency.

This is what the senator, standard-bearer of a faction of the Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino, told INQUIRER chief executives, editors and reporters on Monday night in response to the question what would happen if Poe was barred from the presidential race because of the citizenship issue.

Lacson said Poe's running mate, Sen. Loren Legarda, and the Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino ticket were welcome to join him the rest of the way. But he qualified that he did not need to court their support.

"All I need is Fernando Poe Jr.'s endorsement," he said, adding:

"We are the only dominant personalities in the opposition. Uniting the opposition forces would be easy enough. Besides, we promised to support one another."

Asked if Poe's principal backers, Senators Edgardo Angara and Vicente Sotto III, would pose a problem in such a situation, Lacson said: "They are not the opposition."

Asked about the possibility of campaigning with the rest of the Poe ticket, he said they were welcome to join him, "but I don't need to run after them."

Lacson disclosed that he refused an offer from Poe's camp to reimburse his election-related expenses just so he would back out of the race in the actor's favor.

"Our costs would have already reached around P100 million when the offer was made," he said. "I will

PING/ A10

RUDY ESPERAS

POLITICS, no child's play. Out-of-school children skip rope in a Mandaluyong street unmindful of election posters plastered on a graffiti-covered wall. Candidates of various political persuasions have included revitalized education programs in their campaign agenda, including projects that would take children like the two girls in photo off the streets and into schools.

Poe unveils 19-man team of economic, policy advisers

By Christine O. Avendaño and Doris C. Dumlao

IN A bid to calm concerns over his lack of economic skills, opposition front-runner Fernando Poe Jr. identified yesterday his would-be economic and policy advisers, mostly technocrats and academic heavyweights from top US and Philippine schools.

A statement issued by Rep. Francis Escudero, campaign spokesperson for Poe, named a 19-man, pro-market team of economic, governance, international relations and education experts who would draft his blueprint for economic development should he win the May 10 polls.

"We have what we believe is the most potent group of economists and planners that can be formed," said Escudero.

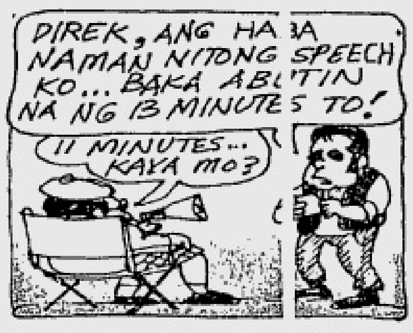
Among the experts tapped by Poe's camp are Raul Fabella, dean of the School of Economics of the University of the Philippines (UP), and Bernardo Villegas, a Harvard University-trained economics professor now with the University of Asia and the Pacific.

Raul Pangalanan, dean of the UP College of Law and doctor of laws, Harvard University, and Victor Andres Manhit, former education undersecretary and now professor of Political Science at De La Salle University (DLSU) were also named to the circle of advisers.

According to Escudero, it was the Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino (KNP) presidential candidate who sought the help of these experts.

Poe unveiled his team of advisers at a time when the peso has fallen against the dollar, government debt has suffered a ratings downgrade and the stock market has become volatile.

POE/ A8



DIREK, ANG HA ?A NAMAN NITONG SPEECH KO... BAKA ABUTIN NA NG 13 MINUTES TO!
11 MINUTES... KAYA MO?

Long live Da King! What is he saying?

By Carlito Pablo

THE ONCE box-office king o movies and perhaps future presiden of the country has a problem with ıalogue.

Now that he's playing his g: eatest role as a presidential candidate, Fe nando Poe Jr. feels he's not getting enoug ı lines.

Yesterday, Poe spent almo: : half a day in a huddle with close campa gn strategists and staff trying to asses the

LONG/ A21

Bro. Eddie: Poll appointments simply 'too much coincidence'

By Blanche S. Rivera
Martin P. Marfil
and Christine O. Avendaño

EVANGELIST Eduardo "Bro. Eddie" Villanueva finds "too much coincidence" in the appointment of Virgilio Garcillano and Manuel Barcelona to the Commission on Elections and their submission of comments to the Supreme Court supporting the petitions seeking to disqualify actor Fernando Poe Jr. from the presidential race.

Villanueva yesterday said that the appointment to the poll body of "controversial people" like Garcillano and Barcelona, who have both been linked to First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo, was suspicious.

"I believe that people to be appointed to such sensitive positions should be like Caesar's wife, beyond reproach. They should have unquestionable integrity and proven, untarnished track records," Villanueva told the INQUIRER in a phone interview yesterday.

Barcelona's relatives allegedly contributed P500,000 to President Macapagal-Arroyo's campaign kitty when she was running for vice president, while Garcillano has been accused of vote shaving and padding by several senators.

Garcillano and Barcelona's submitting comments to the high court separate from the Comelec en banc, asking the tribunal to dismiss the disqualification petitions against Poe, further fueled calls for their ouster from the poll body.

Poe's Kilusan ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino and its senatorial candidates said the two were "unfit" to oversee the May 10 polls and presented a "clear and present danger to elections and democracy."

But Ms Macapagal is taking a hands-off policy on the affairs of the Comelec, saying the commissioners have a mind of their own.

'BRO. EDDIE'/ A8

WANTED FOR KIDNAPPIN

VAL HANDUMON

ENDANGERED GROUP
President Macapagal strikes out the photo of Teddy Padre, No. 8 on the list o the country's most wanted kidnappers. Padre was arrested by government ager s in Quezon City on Monday. *(Story on Page A5.)*

E-mail: pr_news@inquirer.com.ph

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: The eastern section of Visayas and the whole of Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers. SOURCE: PAGASA

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Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	**Cebu**	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	**Tacloban**	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	**Gen. Santos**	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	**Zamboanga**	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	**Cagayan de Oro**	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	**Davao**	Cloudy with Rains

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/02/18/04

Loren forays into Ping's turf

Cavite kingpin backs VP bet

By Carlito Pablo

SEN. Loren Legarda has obtained the endorsement of a key political ally of breakaway opposition presidential candidate Sen. Panfilo Lacson, which Lacson partisans said is the first step in reuniting the divided opposition in case movie star Fernando Poe Jr., the main opposition presidential candidate, is disqualified.

Legarda, who is the running mate of Poe, reportedly got the nod of Cavite political kingpin Juanito Remulla—a former Cavite governor and a firm Lacson supporter—after meeting with him for an hour at the Remullas' Island Cove Resort in Kawit.

Legarda confirmed that the Remullas have agreed to support her vice presidential bid and would be making their support public "in due time."

Legarda flew by helicopter to the Island Cove resort at 9:30 a.m. By lunchtime, she was at the police camp in Tanay, Rizal, where deposed ex-President Joseph Estrada, the bosom friend and principal supporter of Poe, is being detained.

There Legarda is also said to have secured a commitment from Estrada that the Poe-led Koalisyong ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino would "work double-time" for her bid.

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An aide of Jinggoy, a son of Estrada who is running for senator in the Poe-Legarda ticket, quoted Jinggoy as having remarked after the meeting: "Best friends *na sila ng daddy ko* (They are now the best of friends)."

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Legarda said the Magdalo supported her in her 1998 senatorial bid and that she topped the race in Cavite.

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The congressman noted that Lacson has no vice presidential running mate.

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"It has no connection with the disqualification. Let's not put malice into it," she said.

In Tanay, Estrada hosted lunch to celebrate Jinggoy's birthday.

Aside from Legarda, those who came included the other senatorial candidates in the KNP coalition—Rep. Didagen Dilangalen, Boots Anson Roa, Amina Rasul, Juan Ponce Enrile, Francisco Tatad and Salvador Escudero.

The entry of Legarda into the Poe ticket further divided the opposition which earlier split into the Poe and Lacson camps.

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Whirlpool Chest Freezers spell out dual performance. Created with adjustable thermostat, you can use it as a ref or as a freezer.

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2004

Second FRONT PAGE

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MINDING THE STORE

GMA to slow down to put in more work

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

SAYING she would be minding the store, President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday announced she had ordered her handlers to cut back on her participation in campaign sorties to allow her to attend to the "more important" everyday task of running the affairs of state.

The President's "one-foot-in, one-foot-out" strategy involves limiting her attendance to afternoon sorties and avoiding overnight engagements. This was in apparent response to the criticism that she had been neglecting the country's affairs and using her incumbency to promote her candidacy.

"I will leave most of the activities of the campaign to the K4 coalition. Of course, what is more important to me is to mind the governance," she said at the press conference where the country's ninth most wanted kidnapper was presented to her.

"I want to assure the people that we're minding the shop," she added.

Her running mate Sen. Noli de Castro and the K4 coalition's 12 senatorial candidates will have to campaign without her, she said.

Mornings in Metro

"Maybe my mornings will be spent in Metro Manila because I have to do a lot of this work. So that's what I told those who are doing my campaign schedule. We'll just go (campaign) starting at noon, come back at night or come back early the next morning," she said.

Press Secretary Milton Alingod said the President would attend campaign rallies in the provinces and localities the K4 candidates come from depending on her availability.

Ms Macapagal has thus far campaigned in Laguna, Tarlac, Rizal, Mindoro, Baguio City and Cavite in the first week of the campaign period for national candidates.

"Anyway I gave one week to the campaign, it was a good start," she said.

She said she would talk more often to the local and foreign media to compensate for her less frequent campaign exposure.

She said that even though she had been campaigning, governance was never neglected but was "interwoven" with her sorties.

"There are many things that have to be done here (such as) meetings," she said, adding that she met with the National Anti-Kidnapping Task Force yesterday and would be meeting next with chicken suppliers and sugar producers.

Balikatan witness

She will also witness the opening on Monday of this year's RP-US Balikatan war exercise in Palawan, and will use the visit to launch the K4 coalition's campaign in the province.

Ms Macapagal said that lessening her campaign appearances would not affect her chances of winning because of all the candidates, she had the most experience.

"One thing my administration can be proud of is we know how to handle crisis. Look at SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome)," she said.

"What I can say is that I have been tested. It's risky to bet on someone who has not yet been tested in crisis management," she said, alluding to her rivals.

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Comelec can still be fair—Monsod

By TJ Burgonio

THE COMMISSION on Elections is capable of conducting fair and orderly elections but could encounter some "managerial challenges" because of the appointment of two commissioners with "less than sterling" qualifications, according to University of the Philippines professor Solita Monsod.

SOLITA Monsod PDI PHOTO

Monsod, who addressed a student forum at the Far Eastern University on Monday, said the poll body was "logistically" capable of supervising clean and fair polls as it had ample time to produce security papers, print ballots and ship paraphernalia to the precincts before May 10.

"There's no question that paraphernalia and people can be in place by May 10 and canvassing can finish by June 30," she said.

However, the newly appointed commissioners Virgilio Garcillano and Manuel Barcelona Jr. could pose some problems in the coming elections, said Monsod, a political analyst whose husband once served as Comelec chair.

Close to Mike

The new commissioners have come under criticism because of their reported closeness to First Gentleman Jose Miguel "Mike" Arroyo.

Barcelona was reported to have donated money to President Macapagal-Arroyo's campaign chest when she ran for vice president in 1998, while Garcillano was accused by Sen. Aquilino Pimentel of alleged involvement in the vote padding and shaving operation in the 1995 senatorial elections in Mindanao that resulted in Pimentel's defeat.

Monsod said the appointment of Barcelona and Garcillano has eroded the credibility of the poll body which suffered a legal setback after the Supreme Court nullified the Comelec's computerized elections project because of flaws in the bidding.

"The Comelec's credibility must be raised and restored... Unfortunately, the appointment of the two new Comelec commissioners has not done that. It has, in fact, decreased some more the credibility," she said.

"If we really want a Comelec that is credible, the first thing is that we must start with good commissioners," Monsod said.

But calling for the resignation of the new commissioners was not the real solution to the Comelec's credibility problem, she said.

To shore up the public's trust in the poll body, she said the Comelec should include political parties and election deputies, particularly the teachers, police and soldiers, citizens' arms, NGOs and the media, in the planning and implementation of its activities.

"The Comelec can't operate by holding all its cards to its chest. That's how it got into trouble with the automated machines project, it was keeping everything secret," she said.

100% manual

Monsod also proposed that the poll body conduct an entirely "100 percent" manual count of the elections, regardless of how the Supreme Court decides a Comelec motion for the SC to reconsider its earlier decision voiding the automated elections contract.

She also said the Comelec should not conduct a quick count in addition to the official count.

"Supposing their quick count and their official count differ? Who are we going to believe, Comelec or Comelec?" she said, eliciting chuckles from the audience.

Monsod said that after the elections the public should not forget to confront the Comelec about two issues: Why hasn't automation been implemented up to this time and what does it have to show for the P3 billion in funds given by the President for automated counting and canvassing?

"It behooves us to find out what happened to these? If we don't do something about this, we're going to face the same problems in 2007," she said.

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- Carmi Martin
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By Juliet Labog-Javellana

SAYING she would be minding the store, President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday announced she had ordered her handlers to cut back on her participation in campaign sorties to allow her to attend to the "more important" everyday task of running the affairs of state.

The President's "one-foot-in, one-foot-out" strategy involves limiting her attendance to afternoon sorties and avoiding overnight engagements. This was in apparent response to the criticism that she had been neglecting the country's affairs and using her incumbency to promote her candidacy.

"I will leave most of the activities of the campaign to the K4 coalition. Of course, what is more important to me is to mind the governance," she said at the press conference where the country's ninth most wanted kidnapper was presented to her.

"I want to assure the people that we're minding the shop," she added.

Her running mate Sen. Noli de Castro and the K4 coalition's 12 senatorial candidates will have to campaign without her, she said.

Mornings in Metro

"Maybe my mornings will be spent in Metro Manila because I have to do a lot of this work. So that's what I told those who are doing my campaign schedule. We'll just go (campaign) starting at noon, come back at night or come back early the next morning," she said.

Press Secretary Milton Alingod said the President would attend campaign rallies in the provinces and localities the K4 candidates come from depending on her availability.

Ms Macapagal has thus far campaigned in Laguna, Tarlac, Rizal, Mindoro, Baguio City and Cavite in the first week of the campaign period for national candidates.

"Anyway I gave one week to the campaign, it was a good start," she said.

She said she would talk more often to the local and foreign media to compensate for her less frequent campaign exposure.

She said that even though she had been campaigning, governance was never neglected but was "interwoven" with her sorties.

"There are many things that have to be done here (such as) meetings," she said, adding that she met with the National Anti-Kidnapping Task Force yesterday and would be meeting next with chicken suppliers and sugar producers.

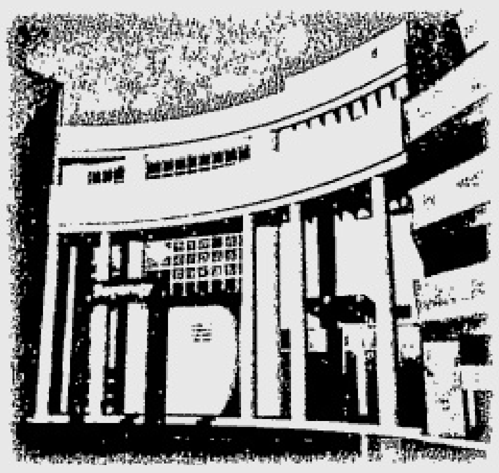
Balikatan witness

She will also witness the opening on Monday of this year's RP-US Balikatan war exercise in Palawan, and will use the visit to launch the K4 coalition's campaign in the province.

Ms Macapagal said that lessening her campaign appearances would not affect her chances of winning because of all the candidates, she had the most experience.

"One thing my administration can be proud of is we know how to handle crisis. Look at SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome)," she said.

"What I can say is that I have been tested. It's risky to bet on someone who has not yet been tested in crisis management," she said, alluding to her rivals.



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Comelec can still be fair—Monsod

By TJ Burgonio

THE COMMISSION on Elections is capable of conducting fair and orderly elections but could encounter some "managerial challenges" because of the appointment of two commissioners with "less than sterling" qualifications, according to University of the Philippines professor Solita Monsod.

Monsod, who addressed a student forum at the Far Eastern University on Monday, said the poll body was "logistically" capable of supervising clean and fair polls as it had ample time to produce security papers, print ballots and ship paraphernalia to the precincts before May 10.

"There's no question that paraphernalia and people can be in place by May 10 and canvassing can finish by June 30," she said.

However, the newly appointed commissioners Virgilio Garcillano and Manuel Barcelona Jr. could pose some problems in the coming elections, said Monsod, a political analyst whose husband once served as Comelec chair.

Close to Mike

The new commissioners have come under criticism because of their reported closeness to First Gentleman Jose Miguel "Mike" Arroyo.

Barcelona was reported to have donated money to President Macapagal-Arroyo's campaign chest when she ran for vice president in 1998, while Garcillano was accused by Sen. Aquilino Pimentel of alleged involvement in the vote padding and shaving operation in the 1995 senatorial elections in Mindanao that resulted in Pimentel's defeat.

Monsod said the appointment of Barcelona and Garcillano has eroded the credibility of the poll body which suffered a legal setback after the Supreme Court nullified the Comelec's computerized elections project because of flaws in the bidding.

"The Comelec's credibility must be raised and restored... Unfortunately, the appointment of the two new Comelec commissioners has not done that. It has, in fact, decreased some more the credibility," she said.

"If we really want a Comelec that is credible, the first thing is that we must start with good commissioners," Monsod said.

But calling for the resignation of the new commissioners was not the real solution to the Comelec's credibility problem, she said.

SOLITA Monsod PDI PHOTO

To shore up the public's trust in the poll body, she said the Comelec should include political parties and election deputies, particularly the teachers, police and soldiers, citizens' arms, NGOs and the media, in the planning and implementation of its activities.

"The Comelec can't operate by holding all its cards to its chest. That's how it got into trouble with the automated machines project, it was keeping everything secret," she said.

100% manual

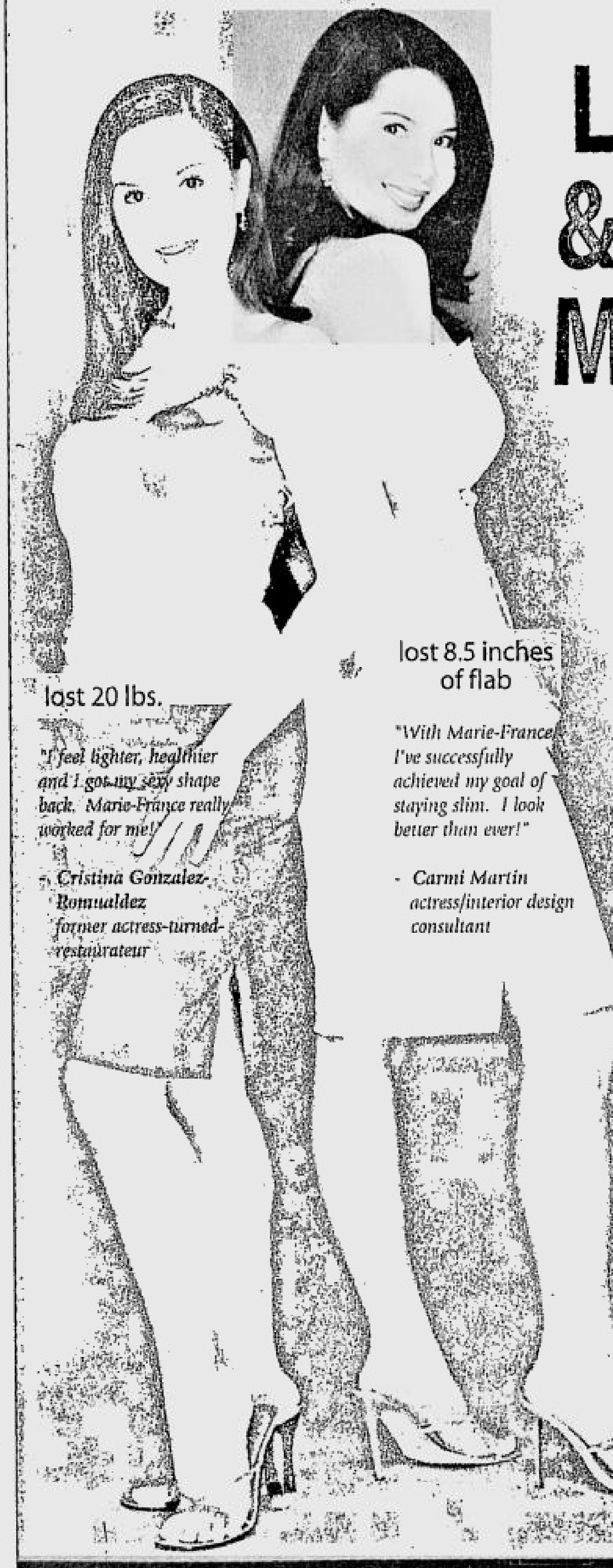
Monsod also proposed that the poll body conduct an entirely "100 percent" manual count of the elections, regardless of how the Supreme Court decides a Comelec motion for the SC to reconsider its earlier decision voiding the automated elections contract.

She also said the Comelec should not conduct a quick count in addition to the official count.

"Supposing their quick count and their official count differ? Who are we going to believe, Comelec or Comelec?" she said, eliciting chuckles from the audience.

Monsod said that after the elections the public should not forget to confront the Comelec about two issues: Why hasn't automation been implemented up to this time and what does it have to show for the P3 billion in funds given by the President for automated counting and canvassing?

"It behooves us to find out what happened to these? If we don't do something about this, we're going to face the same problems in 2007," she said.



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Swiss gov't keeping track of $684-M Marcos money

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

THE SWISS embassy is closely keeping track of the Philippines' part of the deal to compensate martial law victims out of the recovered $684-million Swiss deposits of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos.

"There was a moral commitment between the two governments for part of the money to go to the victims," said Swiss ambassador Lise Favre in a chance interview Monday. But Favre stressed they are leaving it up to the government to work out a compensation package. "It's a Philippine affair... We don't have any influence on that, she said. "But we're keeping track of developments."

The Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG) is worried about Congress' failure to pass a law that would set aside a third of the $684 million for human rights abuse victims. Without it, all recovered ill-gotten wealth goes to agrarian reform.

The Marcos funds have been turned over to the Bureau of Treasury last Feb. 2. But while lawmakers were able to pass House Bill 4535, senators failed to enact Senate Bill 1877 by the time Congress went on recess on Feb. 6. The PCGG still hopes the Senate would pass its bill and that the two chambers would reconcile the two versions during the May 26 to June 4 sessions.

The Swiss Federal Supreme Court has asked the government's commitment to compensate the thousands of martial law victims when it transferred the secret Marcos Swiss accounts to an escrow account here in 1997.

PCGG Commissioner Ruben Carranza said last week they did their best to push for such a law, but added they have no control over Congress. "The commitment is to take steps, not to compensate," he said.

The House version is under fire from two groups of martial law victims who said it has "opened the floodgates" to fraudulent claims. "I can only hope that what's been agreed upon will be followed," was the Swiss ambassador's comment.

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Rape of Filipino maid sparks Taipei protest

TAIPEI—Taiwanese labor activists protested for better treatment of foreign workers yesterday while prosecutors investigated an ex-legislator and former vice-presidential candidate for allegedly sexually assaulting his Filipino maid.

Taiwan officials confirmed on Monday they were investigating allegations that Elmer Fung, 55, sexually abused the domestic worker at his Taipei home last month.

Fung is a member of the New Party, a small political party participating in Taiwan's general elections next month. He has said he's innocent.

The maid—identified only by her first name, Rose—was quickly sent home after Fung paid her NT$800,000 (US$24,150), officials said.

Gathering outside the government's Council for Labor Affairs yesterday, labor activists said Taiwan's foreign labor policies were responsible for Rose's situation.

Members of the Taiwan International Workers Association, which first publicly accused Fung on Sunday, held up signs that said, "No More 'Rose' Story" and "Don't let another Rose suffer sexual harassment."

Mistreatment

The group's chair, Chen Su-hsiang, said that foreign workers often endure mistreatment because they are not allowed to change employers during the three years that they are permitted to work in Taiwan.

"If a domestic worker suffers harassment or even rape in a family, she will often stay and persevere out of fear she will be sent back on the pretext of having disobeyed her employer," Chen said.

Fung returned from a trip to China to defend himself on Monday night, and a small group of family and supporters greeted him at the airport.

He told reporters the woman made up the allegations because she was seeking revenge against his wife, who had complained about her work and had reprimanded her. He also said that he couldn't have raped the woman because he was at home with his family when the crime allegedly occurred on Jan. 23.

Fung said that he paid her but insisted the money was her annual salary and lay-off pay.

His wife and daughter denied they had been trying to buy the Filipino woman's silence.

"The NT$800,000 doesn't mean I admit this thing. As a mother, I only hoped my family would not suffer," Fung's wife, Peng Yeh-ping, told reporters at the airport.

House tour

Fung's daughter Fung Fu-hwa added, "We gave the NT$800,000 to help her, but now that has changed into a sign of our guilt."

On Tuesday, the ex-lawmaker allowed reporters to tour his home, while he argued that his family would have heard him if he had tried to rape the woman in the small apartment.

Labor activist Chen said she had evidence that the payment was hush money, but she was not willing to give more details. The group has said that if Fung was unhappy with the maid's work, he could have just fired her without paying her the unusually large sum of money.

Fung lost his reelection bid in the December 2001 legislative elections. He campaigned for vice president in 2000 for the fringe New Party but he received few votes.

The foreign affairs department yesterday said it would help Rose to get justice if she was still interested in pursuing the case.

DFA spokesperson Julia Heidemann said the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration and the Manila Economic and Cultural Office, the Philippines' de facto embassy in Taipei, will be handling the case.

"If she needs to go back we will assist her, but it's really up to her if still wants to pursue the case. We can't force her to do so," Heidemann said.

Legal aid

Owwa and the Meco have been in touch with Rose and were both ready to provide her with legal assistance, Heidemann added.

Heidemann said that even if Taiwan and the Philippines do not have diplomatic ties, the case should be pursued to give justice to Rose.

Taiwanese laws do not allow out-of-court settlement of sexual assault cases. Prosecutors in the island said it would be difficult to pursue the case if Rose does not appear before the Taiwanese court.

Meco's counterpart in Manila, the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office, has refused to comment on the case, saying it does not deal with criminal suits.

"If it's true, we feel sorry for her. But we believe that the Taiwanese judicial system will resolve this," Teco representative Hsin Hsing-wu told reporters. *AP with a report from Jerome Aning*

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Election posters on war memorial

A CIVIC group yesterday complained about election posters being pasted on World War II memorials ahead of the May 10 presidential election, claiming they desecrated the shrines.

Edna Binkowski of the Filipino-American Memorial Endowment, a private group involved in preserving World War II memorials, said she was enraged when she recently saw posters of vice presidential candidate Noli de Castro on two Bataan Death March markers in her hometown.

"My blood was boiling," she said. "A shrine is a shrine .... I don't want to embarrass candidates, but they should understand."

More than 70,000 Filipino and American soldiers who surrendered to invading Japanese troops in April 1942 in Bataan were forced into a brutal six-day, 105-kilometer march to the north. Only 54,000 survived.

Leslie Murray, the group's vice president, said they will write a formal complaint to the Commission on Elections, and seek reimbursement of cleaning costs from candidates. AP

No. 8 in kidnapping most wanted nabbed

THE COUNTRY'S eighth most wanted kidnapper has been arrested and was presented to President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday.

Teddy Padre, who had a P500,000 bounty on his head, was arrested in a Manila suburb on Monday on an informant's tip. Police accused him of being the mastermind in the March 2003 abduction of a businesswoman, who subsequently escaped.

No other details of the capture were available.

"His picture was seen by a concerned citizen on a poster of wanted kidnappers," the President said.

The suspect was the ninth kidnap gang leader to be arrested or killed by the National Anti-Kidnapping Task Force (Naktf) since December.

The President said that since she appointed former Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes Naktf chief nearly four months ago, the anti-kidnapping campaign has netted 71 suspects, including nine on the most wanted list.

Crossed out

She then crossed out Padre's picture, which was No. 8, on Naktf's Most Wanted Kidnappers poster.

The President also disclosed that US Secretary of State Colin Powell recently called her to offer his congratulations on the rescue of kidnapped American citizen Alastair Joseph Onglingswan, who had been held in chains by his captors for over three weeks.

The 35-year-old victim was allegedly found in the home of Hong Kong native George Yao, a resident of Bacoor, Cavite, who was arrested and confessed to taking part in the 2001 kidnapping of a Briton.

"In fact, Colin Powell called me up to congratulate you (the police) and to thank us," Ms Macapagal said.

She said she and Powell also discussed other "foreign policy" matters but she did not elaborate.

Onglingswan, a Los Angeles resident, arrived in the Philippines last month to look into the possibility of investing in an information technology venture.

The President then differentiated the anti-kidnapping campaign of her administration with that of her detained predecessor Joseph Estrada, saying the latter had relied on paying ransom rather than going after the kidnappers.

"During the time of Estrada, the emphasis was on getting the victim, usually through ransom. Now the strategy is to go after the kidnappers, a dedicated manhunt," the President said.

She said her anti-kidnapping campaign was also more effective because it drew the cooperation of the community.

She said publishing the names and photographs of the most wanted kidnappers had led to the success of her campaign.

Ms Macapagal also said that during Estrada's time, captured kidnappers could get out on bail. Now, she said, they stay in detention while being tried in court. *AFP; Juliet Labog-Javellana*

NAKTF
DETAINEE

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo presents to media suspected kidnap leader Teddy Padre. VAL HANDUMON

Namfrel's idea of stopping flying voters is messy

By Margaux Ortiz

"DIP half of your index finger in indelible ink to prevent the proliferation of flying voters."

A not-so-neat but effective trick suggested by National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel) National Chair Jose Concepcion Jr. during the Financial Executives Institute of the Philippines meeting in Makati yesterday.

Concepcion said the present practice of applying indelible ink on just the voter's nail is insufficient and could easily be removed.

"Dipping one's finger is the best guarantee against flying voters," he said. "It's visible, cheap and doable."

The Namfrel chair stressed that his suggestion has already been tried in Cambodia and India and was proven to be successful.

He added that the Commission on Elections (Comelec) should stop importing indelible ink and order the materials from local manufacturers.

"We, together with the Institute of Science and Technology, the Comelec, and other political parties, would then check if the ink would pass our standards," Concepcion said.

He also suggested that the Comelec hire third or fourth year college students as election assistants because of the shortage of schoolteachers willing to do the job.

There are 200,000 to 250,000 precincts in the country that are in need of 620,000 teachers. Yet only 200,000 teachers will be deployed by the Department of Education.

"Many teachers even want to be paid P2,000 a day which the government could not afford. The Comelec should consider our proposal to deploy idealistic young adults who could also do the job well," Concepcion said.

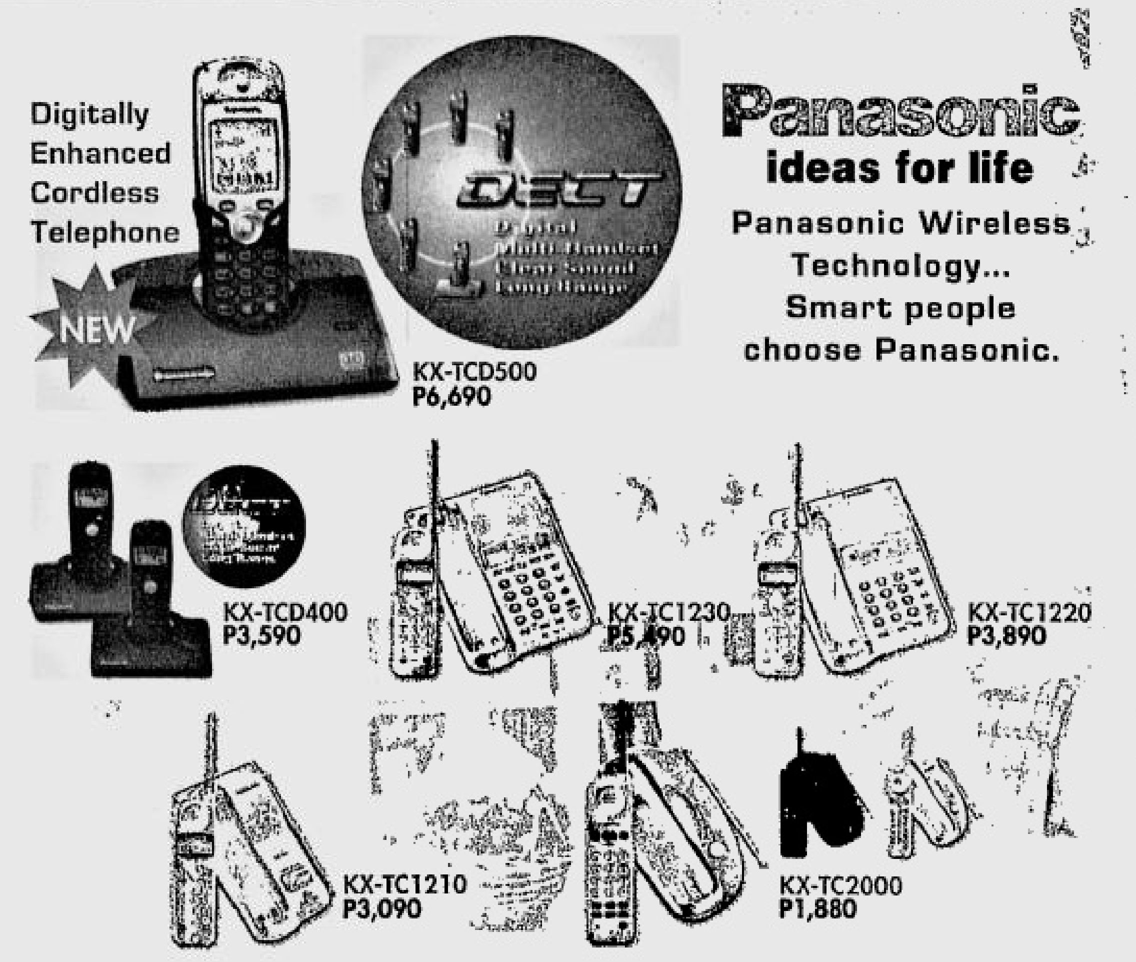
And one last suggestion: The Comelec should also come out with a list identifying the country's hot spots as soon as possible. This way, unnecessary threats and violence in these places will be avoided, he said.

Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos, who also attended the meeting, was apprehensive about Concepcion's suggestions. He said dipping fingers in indelible ink is not necessary.

"A drop (of ink) on the nail would last two to three days if done properly," Abalos said.

He added that the government has other members of the civil service to act as election assistants. They could also hire members of the Reserved Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) if needed.

The Comelec chair did say they would seriously consider Concepcion's suggestion to buy indelible ink from local manufacturers instead of importing them.



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Cousin denied US visa, dashing Pinoy's hope for new kidney

CHICAGO—A Chicago man had his hopes for a desperately-needed kidney transplant dashed when US authorities denied his Filipino cousin, a potential donor, a visa to travel to the United States.

Erich Monzon was diagnosed with lupus, a debilitating auto-immune disease that attacks the internal organs, when he was 16.

In 2000, he began dialysis treatments to filter his blood and a year later, he was put on a waiting list for a donor kidney, but his rare blood type complicated the task of finding a good match, according to his doctors at the University of Illinois (UIC) Medical Center.

So Monzon's father turned to his relatives back home in the Philippines in search of a potential donor.

Blood tests showed Monzon's cousin, Ben Liggayu, was the best match, with the same AB blood type.

"He is a match as good as a brother," said Enrico Benedetti, UIC's chief of transplant surgery.

Liggayu applied for a visitor's visa to travel to the United States for the operation that could improve Monzon's life and wean him off the dialysis machine that he is hooked up to 12 hours a day.

But US embassy officials in Manila refused the 44-year-old farmer a visa, fearing he might overstay his visit.

The 44-year-old father-of-four "failed to demonstrate that he has sufficiently strong familial, economic or professional ties that would cause his return after a temporary stay in the United States," embassy officials explained in a letter to an Illinois lawmaker who intervened to press Monzon's case.

"Although Mr. Liggayu works as a farmer, his monthly income is very modest. He has fairly small savings and no assets."

Jan Schakowsky, a US Representative for Illinois who counts Monzon among her constituents, has written back to embassy officials, asking them to reconsider their decision.

"Erich is in dire need of a kidney transplant but no other suitable kidney donors have been found in the United States," she wrote. "Since his cousin is of a compatible blood type, it is of great importance that Mr. Liggayu be permitted to enter the States for further testing."

Monzon's doctors say that he could spend several more years on the waiting list if his cousin is refused permission to enter the United States. As it is, his disease has severely compromised his quality of life.

The 24-year-old struggled through undergraduate studies, but is not well enough to pursue a law degree as he had hoped.

"We remain ready to do the transplant," said Benedetti. "This is a young man who deserves a right to a better life."

Benedetti expressed surprise at the decision, which he said was unusual in his experience.

"We've had donors from the Philippines, the Far East and the Middle East come here before."

"I think the difference is Sept. 11," he said, referring to the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington, and the ensuing crackdown on foreign visitors.

"There is a lot more scrutiny now. Erich is being penalized because of that." *AFP*

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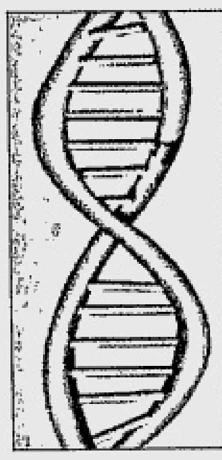

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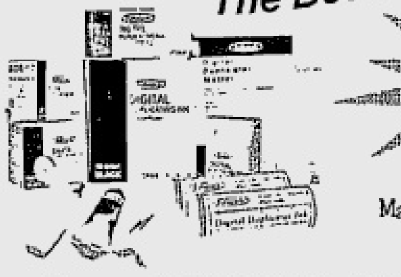

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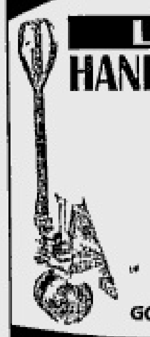

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- Parent's Certificate of Employment

Qualifiers shall take the GSIS Competitive Examination to be administered by the Center for Educational Measurement.

Scholars can choose from among any of the following 4 or 5-yr. GSIS Priority Courses: Accountancy, Actuarial Science, Business Administration, Computer Science and related IT courses, Economics, Engineering major in Computer, Civil, Electrical & Electronics, Electronics & Communications, Industrial, Management and Mechanical only, Finance, Management, Marketing, Mass Communications, Mathematics and Statistics.

For more details, please visit the GSIS Main Office or your nearest GSIS Branch/District Office or contact Emma, Nelda, Meljune and/or Marisa of the GSIS-HRDD Scholarship Staff at Tel. Nos. 551-1878 or 891-6161 locals 4862/4863.

Application deadline: 2 April 2004.

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Cousin denied US visa, dashing Pinoy's hope for new kidney

CHICAGO—A Chicago man had his hopes for a desperately-needed kidney transplant dashed when US authorities denied his Filipino cousin, a potential donor, a visa to travel to the United States.

Erich Monzon was diagnosed with lupus, a debilitating autoimmune disease that attacks the internal organs, when he was 16.

In 2000, he began dialysis treatments to filter his blood and a year later, he was put on a waiting list for a donor kidney, but his rare blood type complicated the task of finding a good match, according to his doctors at the University of Illinois (UIC) Medical Center.

So Monzon's father turned to his relatives back home in the Philippines in search of a potential donor.

Blood tests showed Monzon's cousin, Ben Liggayu, was the best match, with the same AB blood type.

"He is a match as good as a brother," said Enrico Benedetti, UIC's chief of transplant surgery.

Liggayu applied for a visitor's visa to travel to the United States for the operation that could improve Monzon's life and wean him off the dialysis machine that he is hooked up to 12 hours a day.

But US embassy officials in Manila refused the 44-year-old farmer a visa, fearing he might overstay his visit.

The 44-year-old father-of-four "failed to demonstrate that he has sufficiently strong familial, economic or professional ties that would cause his return after a temporary stay in the United States," embassy officials explained in a letter to an Illinois lawmaker who intervened to press Monzon's case.

"Although Mr. Liggayu works as a farmer, his monthly income is very modest. He has fairly small savings and no assets."

Jan Schakowsky, a US Representative for Illinois who counts Monzon among her constituents, has written back to embassy officials, asking them to reconsider their decision.

"Erich is in dire need of a kidney transplant but no other suitable kidney donors have been found in the United States," she wrote. "Since his cousin is of a compatible blood type, it is of great importance that Mr. Liggayu be permitted to enter the States for further testing."

Monzon's doctors say that he could spend several more years on the waiting list if his cousin is refused permission to enter the United States. As it is, his disease has severely compromised his quality of life.

The 24-year-old struggled through undergraduate studies, but is not well enough to pursue a law degree as he had hoped.

"We remain ready to do the transplant," said Benedetti. "This is a young man who deserves a right to a better life."

Benedetti expressed surprise at the decision, which he said was unusual in his experience.

"We've had donors from the Philippines, the Far East and the Middle East come here before."

"I think the difference is Sept. 11," he said, referring to the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington, and the ensuing crackdown on foreign visitors.

"There is a lot more scrutiny now. Erich is being penalized because of that." *AFP*

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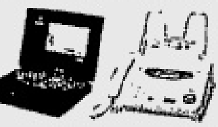

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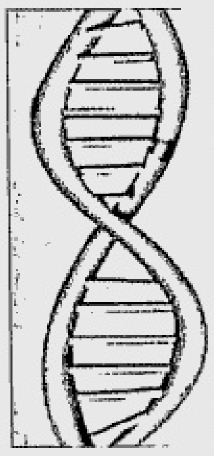

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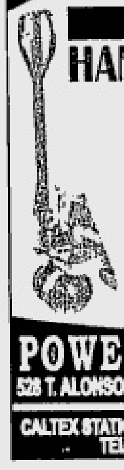

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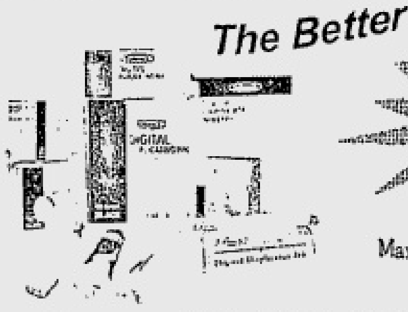

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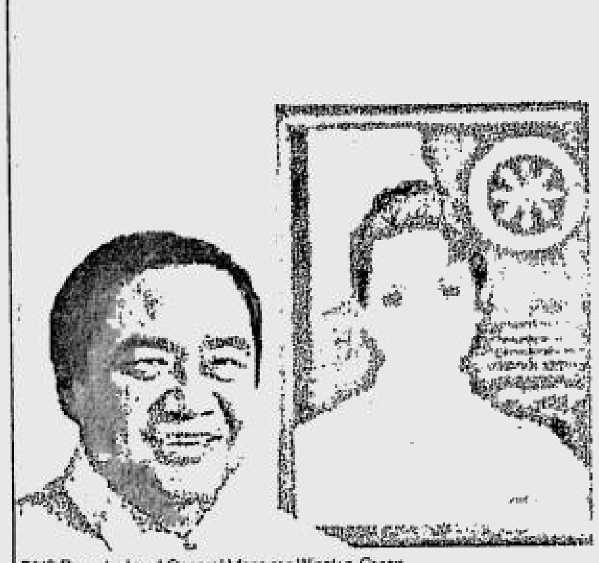

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Int'l Christian evangelists rooting for Bro. Eddie

By Blanche S. Rivera

HE has prayed over his flock countless times, but today, it's his turn to get a little help from his friends.

In Singapore, Christian leaders from all over the world gathered today to pray for Eduardo "Brother Eddie" Villanueva and other evangelists who are running for top posts in their countries. Villanueva, founder of the Jesus is Lord Church Worldwide who is seeking the presidency in the May elections, is one of at least three evangelists from Asia and Oceania who are running for public office.

Villanueva's program of government and vision for the Philippines will be aired before some 3,000 participants from 60 countries who will pray for him and evangelists from Indonesia and Solomon Islands. "The purpose is to pray for Christian leaders who are running for top offices," Fred Magbanua told the INQUIRER in a phone interview yesterday. Magbanua and Gus Lising, both pastors, are members of the multi-sectoral Task Force Pagbabago backing Villanueva's candidacy. Both are in Singapore with Villanueva.

The annual gathering of Christian leaders opened Sunday and will close Friday at the Raffles City Convention Center where Villanueva will speak from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. today. The meeting is sponsored by the Bethany Church in Singapore.

Villanueva is running on a platform of national renewal and restoration of integrity in government, which he said would be the key to peace, economic progress, and productivity in the country.

His candidacy has troubled Malacañang, which was banking on the support of the Christian leader to boost President Macapagal's chances to stay in the Palace for another six years.

Apart from the support of some five million JIL members here and abroad, Villanueva is banking on the "innate goodness of the silent majority" who he said would vote for change on May 10.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Wednesday, February 18, 2004
6th Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading:	Jas 1:19-27
Gospel:	Mk 8:22-26

When Jesus and his disciples came to Bethsaida, Jesus was asked to touch a blind man who was brought to him. He took the blind man by the hand and led him outside the village. When he had put spittle on his eyes and laid his hands upon him, he asked, "Can you see anything?" The man, who was beginning to see, replied, "I see people! They look like trees, but they move around." Then Jesus laid his hands on his eyes again and the man could see perfectly. His sight was restored and he could see everything clearly.

Then Jesus sent him home saying, "Do not return to the village."

Commentary

In Italian they call it "campanilismo." A "campanile" is a church bell-tower—in the context a village church bell-tower. 'Campanilismo' is the attitude of one who thinks that his own place is the only real place in the world. It applies to bigger villages too: a New Yorker said, "New York is real; the rest is done with mirrors!"

Jesus took the blind man by the hand and led him outside the village; then when he had healed him he said, "Do not return to the village."

A village identifies you in too great detail. It locks you into a narrow identity. (And you do the same to the others; village is something we do to one another.) You are not free to see things differently from the other villagers—unless you are willing to accept the still narrower identity of village idiot. Leaving your village is like leaving the womb: it is a setting out into a new life.

Spiritually the village may symbolize the ego. One's ego is seldom the independent thing it claims to be: it is supported (even imprisoned) by a rather small group of like-thinking people. When that ego is really isolated it is the village idiot. "Idiot" comes from the Greek word "idios," which means "peculiar, private." We may have to become a village idiot for a time. It's a long hard road to humanity.

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SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

JUDICIAL ETHICS—Conduct of a judge—In administrative proceeedings, the burden of proof that respondent committed the acts complained of rests on the complainant. In the present case, complainant contends that respondent judge caused his arrest on December 12, 1997 on the basis of the already invalidated warrant of arrest dated May 31, 1991 as the case against him had already been dismissed. In Limbona vs Limbona, we held that even in an administrative case, the Rules of Court require that if the respondent judge should be disciplined for grave misconduct or any graver offense, the evidence against him should be competent and should be derived from direct knowledge. The judiciary to which the respondent belongs demands no less. Before any of its members could be faulted, competent evidence should be presented, especially since the charge is penal in character. In the present case, we find that complainant failed to discharge the burden of proving the allegations in his complaint by the required quantum of evidence. Nevertheless, the court agrees with the observation of the Investigating Justice that respondent, under the facts and circumstances of the case, should be admonished to be more circumspect in his official and personal deportment. Upon being shown a copy of the alias warrant of arrest, he should have advised Sandalo to go to the sala of Judge Burgos who had issued the same so as to avoid any misapprehension against him (respondent) as what happened in this case. [Citations omitted.] [Justice Austria-Martinez, Second Division, Ejercito vs Suerte, A.M. No. RTJ-99-1501. September 3, 2003]

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Poe unveils 19-man team . . .

From page A1

His poor background in education and his silence on his economic platform compounded fears of businessmen about his lack of experience in managing the country's affairs.

But Escudero brushed aside these concerns, saying, "These distinguished personalities, coming from the academe, the business community, the labor sector and NGOs, all share a common vision—that of a better Philippines. It is a vision that guides the campaign of Mr. Poe."

'A-team'

Other members of the team the KNP described as "intelligent, experienced, pragmatic and patriotic" are Ponciano Intal Jr. (Angelo King Institute for Economics and Business Studies; Ph.D., Yale University), Calixto Chikiamco (columnist and political economist), Epicetus Patalinhug (professor, UP School of Business Administration) and Romy Bernardo (former finance undersecretary and director of the Asian Development Bank).

The rest of the economic advisers are Benjamin Espiritu (chair, Business and Governance Department of DLSU, Graduate School of Business), Vic Macalincag (former finance undersecretary), Ben Marcelino (professor of Economics, San Beda College), Manny Dannug (dean of College of Economics, Finance and Political Science, Polytechnic University of the Philippines) and Leo Gonzales (professor, Agricultural Economics, UP Los Baños; international agriculture economist).

In the area of governance, Poe has sought the help of Francisco Magno (professor of Political Science, DLSU), Julio Teehankee (professor of Political Science, DLSU), Joel Mangahas (professor of Governance, UP-National College of Public Administration and Governance), Danny Reyes (professor of Governance, UP-National College of Public Administration and Governance) and Allen Surla (professor of Urban Planning, DLSU).

Renato de Castro, a professor of International Relations at DLSU and chair of International Studies, was included in the team to advise him on international relations and security.

Impressive?

In a separate interview, Sen. Vicente Sotto III, Poe's personal campaign manager, said that Poe had been meeting with the group since he declared his intention to run for the presidency in November.

"The mere fact that they were impressed with him should give peace of mind to those who are skeptical of his capabilities as a leader," said Sotto. "They like him and they are willing to help him."

Escudero said the biggest challenge confronting the country's leadership was crafting a framework for a sustainable economic development.

"The blueprint for economic development will be guided by fundamental market principles and shall be founded on Mr. Poe's commitment to alleviate poverty, provide basic services efficiently and effectively, create more jobs and ensure equal opportunities to all Filipinos," Escudero said.

In his proclamation rally last week, the 64-year-old Poe summarized the country's main problems in three words: Breakfast, lunch and dinner.

'He's the one'

According to Chikiamco, Poe could help unite the country now facing deep political fraction brought about by Edsa II that ousted President Joseph Estrada from Malacañang and installed President Macapagal-Arroyo as his successor.

"FPJ is not a captive of any existing system," Chikiamco said. "He's an outsider without political debt to anybody so he will be able to reform the system and implement the country's medium-term development program which has not been implemented by politicians captive by their own vested interests."

Bernardo said he agreed to be one of the movie actor's advisers because "he's sincere."

"People see him only as an actor but he has a good track record as a businessman. He has the longest-running production company. He has the trust and confidence of the people," Bernardo said.

Rival candidate Sen. Panfilo Lacson said two top economists under the Estrada administration form the core of his economic team.

In a visit to the INQUIRER office on Monday night, Lacson admitted that he had a series of meetings with Benjamin Diokno and Felipe Medalla to help him devise his economic platform. *With reports Christian Esguerra, AFP*

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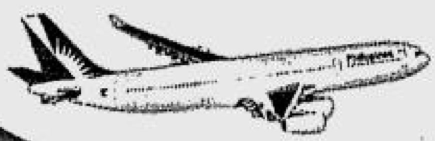

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					until 15Mar
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PR131	Daily	A320/B737	05:15	06:25	1448
PR133	Daily	B737	09:10	10:20	1448
PR135	Daily	B737	15:30	16:40	1448
MANILA TO BUTUAN					
PR477	Daily	B737	10:45	12:15	2048
MANILA TO CAGAYAN					
PR181	Daily	B737	05:10	06:40	2048
PR183	Daily	B737	10:00	11:30	2048
PR185	Daily	B737	13:00	14:30	2048
MANILA TO CEBU					
PR843	Daily	EQV	05:00	06:15	1448
PR847	Daily	A330	07:30	08:45	1448
PR853	Daily	B744/A330	09:30	10:45	1448
PR857	Daily	A330	12:00	13:15	1448
PR861	We/Th/Sa/Su	A320/B37	13:00	14:15	1448
PR849	Daily	EQV	15:00	16:15	1448
PR863	Daily	EQV	17:30	18:45	1448
PR855	Daily	B737	19:30	20:45	1448
MANILA TO DAVAO					
PR809	Daily	A330	05:00	06:45	2048
PR811	Daily	A330	10:15	12:00	2048
PR815	Daily Ex Th	A330	15:40	17:25	2048
PR813	Thursday	A320	16:05	17:50	2048
MANILA TO ILOILO					
PR139	Daily	B737	05:20	06:25	1448
PR141	Daily	A320/B737	09:20	10:25	1448
PR143	Daily	B737	15:15	16:20	1448
MANILA TO KALIBO					
PR321	Daily	B737	09:30	10:25	1448
PR325	Daily	B737	15:10	16:05	1448
MANILA TO PUERTO PRINCESA					
PR195	Daily	A330/A320	08:00	09:15	1448
MANILA TO ROXAS					
PR189	Daily	B737	05:30	06:25	1348
MANILA TO TACLOBAN					
PR191	Daily	B737	06:00	07:15	1348
PR193	Daily	B737	13:30	14:45	1348
MANILA TO ZAMBOANGA					
PR123	Daily	B737	05:30	07:00	1998
PR125	Daily	B737	15:40	17:10	1998

Flight No.	Frequency	Aircraft	Departure	Arrival	One-Way Fare
					until 15Mar
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PR132	Daily	A320/B737	07:25	08:25	1448
PR134	Daily	B737	11:00	12:00	1448
PR136	Daily	B737	17:20	18:20	1448
BUTUAN TO MANILA					
PR478	Daily	B737	13:15	14:45	2048
CAGAYAN TO MANILA					
PR182	Daily	B737	07:40	09:05	2048
PR184	Daily	B737	12:20	13:45	2048
PR186	Daily	B737	15:20	16:45	2048
CEBU TO MANILA					
PR842	Daily	EQV	05:00	06:10	1448
PR844	Mo/We/Th/Fr/Su	EQV	07:30	08:40	1448
PR848	Daily	A330	09:30	10:40	1448
PR854	Daily	B744/A330	12:00	13:10	1448
PR858	Daily	EQV	15:00	16:10	1448
PR852	Daily	EQV	17:30	18:40	1448
PR866	Daily	EQV	19:30	20:40	1448
PR868	Th/Su	A330	20:30	21:40	1448
PR856	We/Fr/Sa/Su	B737	21:30	22:40	1448
DAVAO TO MANILA					
PR810	Daily	A330	07:45	09:25	2048
PR812	Daily	A330	13:00	14:40	2048
PR816	Daily Ex Th	A330	18:25	20:05	2048
PR814	Thursday	A320	18:40	20:20	2048
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PR140	Daily	B737	07:25	08:25	1448
PR142	Daily	A320/B737	11:25	12:25	1448
PR144	Daily	B737	17:00	18:00	1448
KALIBO TO MANILA					
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PR326	Daily	B737	16:45	17:35	1448
PUERTO PRINCESA TO MANILA					
PR196	Daily	A330/A320	10:30	11:45	1448
ROXAS TO MANILA					
PR190	Daily	B737	07:25	08:20	1348
TACLOBAN TO MANILA					
PR192	Daily	B737	08:05	09:15	1348
PR194	Daily	B737	15:25	16:35	1348
ZAMBOANGA TO MANILA					
PR124	Daily	B737	07:50	09:20	1998
PR126	Daily	B737	17:50	19:20	1998

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'Bro. Eddie' . . .

From page A1

"We are standing off completely from the affairs of the Comelec and we have nothing to do with the positions of the electoral body or any of its commissioners," Ms Macapagal said in a statement.

The President, who has continued to defend her appointees and to chide their critics for lack of proof, said it was important that "all crucial issues should be dealt with with justice and fairness."

Poe's campaign spokesperson Rep. Francis Escudero said the "past and present acts" of the two commissioners make them "totally unfit to impartially oversee" the May polls.

Escudero said Ms Macapagal could "undo the damage" caused by her ill-advised appointments "by exerting moral suasion on her nominees to resign from the poll body."

"(Garcillano and Barcelona) have now removed all doubts as to their partisanship with their comments filed with the Supreme Court for the disqualification of Poe," opposition reelectionist Sen. Aquilino Pimentel said in a statement.

"They have thrown caution to the wind and proclaimed their bias for Ms Macapagal," Pimentel said. "They themselves have provided the proof of their total unfitness for the Comelec office."

KNP senatorial candidate Francisco Tatad said the "belated intervention" of Garcillano and Barcelona "appears to be no more than their way of showing gratitude to Ms Macapagal for their unconstitutional appointment."

In Kalibo, Aklan, another presidential candidate, Sen. Panfilo Lacson, said the comments of Garcillano and Barcelona on the citizenship issue of Poe supported allegations that they were placed in the poll body to help Ms Macapagal in the elections.

Lacson said he had documents to prove that Barcelona contributed heavily to the campaign of Ms Macapagal when she ran for vice president in 1998.

Lacson, however, said he would still like to give the two commissioners the benefit of the doubt. "The issues are being discussed on the merits. Let's just wait for what would happen next," he added.

But presidential candidate Raul Roco said in Davao City that he doubted whether the electorate could still trust the poll body to carry out clean elections with the continued presence of the two appointees of Ms Macapagal.

"The Constitution says that the members of the Comelec shall be men of known probity. These two, by their acts, are making it known that they lack prudence," said Roco, referring to Garcillano and Barcelona.

Roco did not mince words whe he said that the two "failed miserably" in this constitutional qualification.

Garcillano disclosed that the Comelec's law department had questioned his decision to submit a separate opinion on Poe's citizenship.

He said he did not inform Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos that he was issuing a separate opinion.

"In fact, I was the first one to submit ... but it was returned by Attorney Alioden Dalaig (the head of the Comelec's law department). I said why? But that is not prohibited by the Supreme Court. We can make our separate comment or opinion," Garcillano said at a press briefing.

Dalaig was the one who filed the Comelec's comment before the Supreme Court. In the Comelec's comment, Dalaig said the commission acted within its jurisdiction when it handled the case but added that the poll body had no power to decide on Poe's citizenship.

The Comelec lawyer then asked the Supreme Court to dismiss the petitions seeking Poe's disqualification despite admitting that "there appears to be many loose ends" in the case, which should be settled to determine Poe's citizenship.

Garcillano said he first read the Comelec opinion before he formulated his own opinion. *With reports from Michael Lim Ubac and Norman Bordadora*

Palace orders use of coco-diesel

MALACAÑANG has ordered all government agencies and corporations to start using coco-diesel in all their diesel-run vehicles, just over a year after the "Earth-friendly" fuel was introduced in the motor pool of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

President Macapagal-Arroyo gave the directive in memorandum signed last Feb. 9 in line with the implementation of the Clean Air Act, Environment Secretary Elisea Gozun said yesterday.

The DENR central office in Quezon City started using coco-diesel–or coconut methyl ester–for its vehicles in November 2002, Gozun said.

CME is one of the chemical products derived from coconut oil and its development for commercial use is spearheaded by the Philippine Coconut Authority. The fuel can be used in its pure form or as an additive to regular diesel, and requires no engine modification, according to the PCA website.

The fuel is considered a cleaner alternative to regular diesel as it lowers sulfur and greenhouse gas emissions apart from reducing engine wear, the DENR said.

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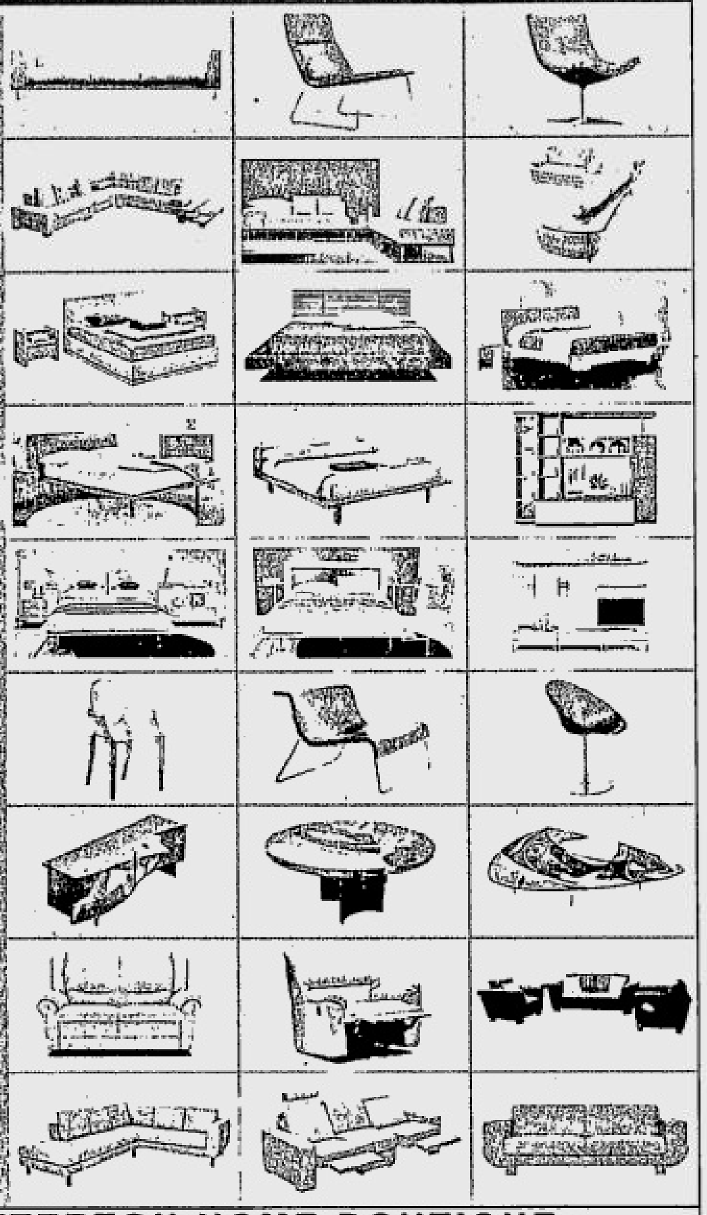

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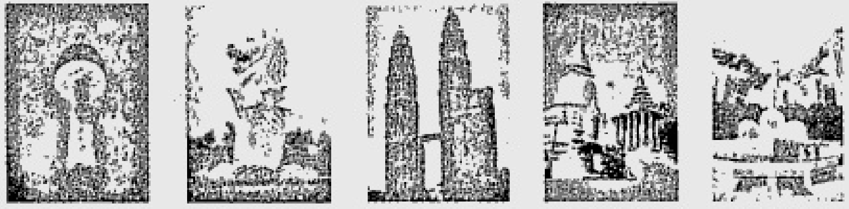

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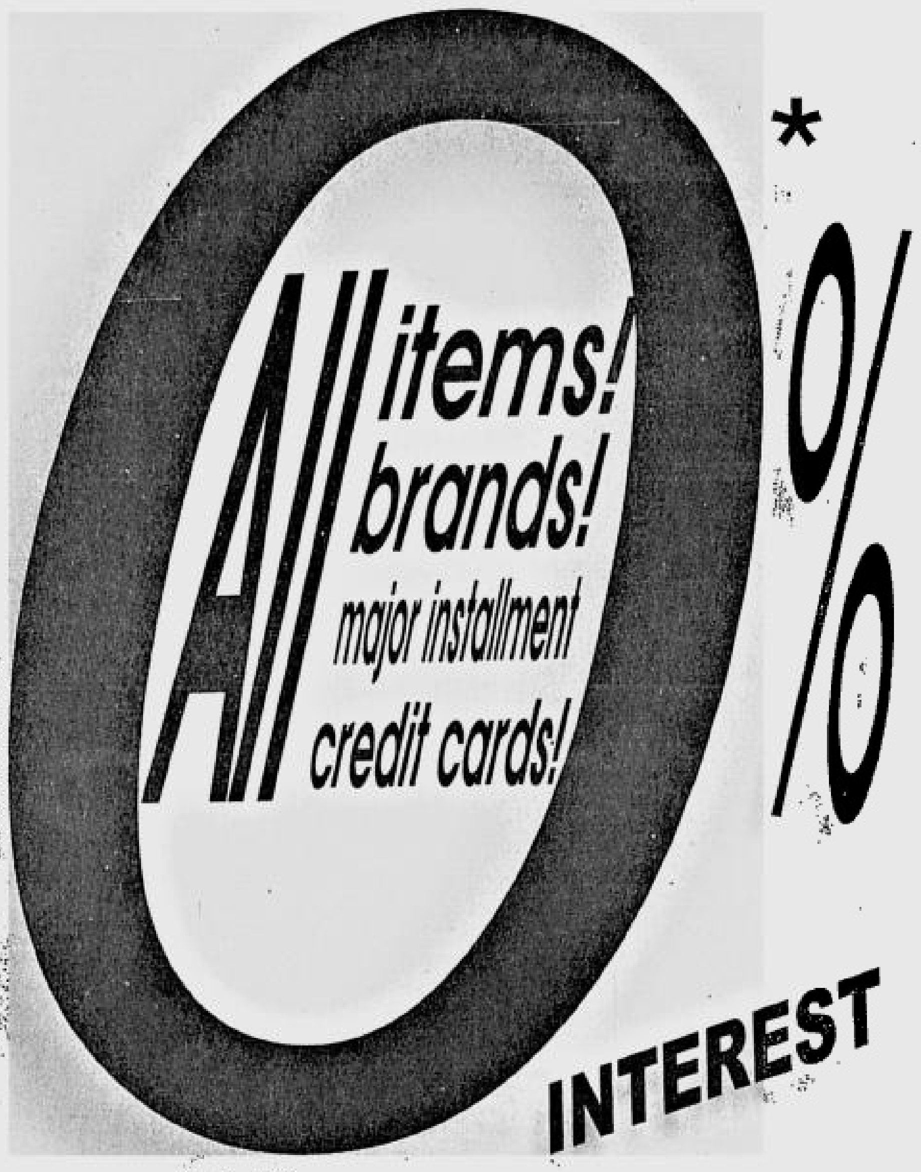
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Ping: All I need is FPJ blessing

From page A1

admit the offer gave me sleepless nights. We are but human, anyway. I had to tell them right away that I was not interested."

Lacson said the offer of reimbursement was extended by a "mutual friend" who had invited Poe and him to a meeting sometime last month, way before the official campaign period started on Feb. 10.

He quoted the friend as saying that in the event of Poe's victory, Lacson would be named interior secretary and "anointed" in 2010 as the actor's successor.

There was also an offer for his political leaders to be appointed to key government positions, Lacson said.

Sought yesterday for comment, Poe's campaign spokesperson Rep. Francis Escudero (NPC, Sorsogon) pointed out that Lacson himself had said that the actor did not make the offer.

"We don't want to pick a fight with Senator Lacson," Escudero said. "FPJ has a high regard for Senator Lacson, and definitely he will not do what's now being claimed."

Escudero also noted that Poe and Lacson had earlier met privately, with no witnesses, "so nobody can claim that somebody did this or that."

Self-respect

Lacson said that he and Poe eventually did meet and that he told the actor that he was rejecting the offer.

"I told him, 'Egos can be set aside but there is such a thing as self-respect. Tell your people not to come to me again with offers of reimbursements and concessions,'" Lacson said.

He said Poe denied having authorized such an offer in exchange for his backing out of the presidential race.

He also said Poe continued to strike him as a very sincere man.

But Lacson is still smarting from the LDP leadership's decision to draft party outsider Poe as its candidate instead of putting the actor through a selection process.

"That was the only thing I asked of them," he said. "They could not even give me that. I even said that I was willing to go back to the Senate if I was not chosen standard-bearer."

'Hang on'

Lacson, chief of the Philippine National Police during the term of ousted President Joseph Estrada, expressed dismay over how the Macapagal administration and the current PNP leadership had been treating officers identified with him.

He said Directors Lucas Managuelod, Reynaldo Acop and Victor Batac and Chief Supt. Francisco Zubia could hope to revive their careers only if he were elected president.

"What can I advise them? Well, just hang on," he said.

Lacson said Managuelod and company had been on "floating" status since he left the PNP.

He said Zubia, his classmate at the Philippine Military Academy (Class 1971), was put in the "special oversight committee," an obscure panel assigned to propose reforms in the police organization. PNP insiders consider it another "freezer" for officers who have fallen out of grace.

Lacson said Managuelod was sacked simply because Ms Macapagal had been told that the official was meeting with him.

RUDY ESPERAS

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Gov't to pursue talks despite NPA attacks

From page A1

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Even so, government negotiators rejected a key NDF demand that Manila work out the lifting of the terrorist tag on the CPP, NPA and Sison, saying the blacklistings were sovereign decisions by foreign governments. Government negotiators instead urged communist rebels to halt their attacks, which are considered terrorist acts by the international community, to pave the way for their removal from the blacklists

Biggest police loss

Both sides did not agree on a ceasefire and NPA guerrillas have stepped up their assaults, killing nine policemen in an ambush on a police and military convoy on Monday afternoon in Milagros, Masbate. It was the biggest police loss in a rebel attack in recent weeks.

The guerrillas opened fire from a roadside after a truck in front of the convoy struck an NPA land mine, instantly killing a number of the policemen and wounding at least four others. Army Scout Rangers aboard a jeep in the convoy returned fire, killing a guerrilla.

Presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said the attackers would be hunted down but added that the attacks would not derail the peace talks.

"Talks are gaining ground, so we will sustain that momentum until a lasting peace agreement is forged . . . so that our communities can finally be freed from these depredations," Bunye said.

Chief government negotiator Silvestre Bello III told the INQUIRER that the NPA ambush should provide both sides "greater resolve in pursuing the peace talks and addressing the roots of the armed conflict."

Bello said the government would raise the NPA attack before the newly formed Joint Monitoring Committee, the interim body implementing the 1998 Comprehensive Agreement on Respect of Human Rights and International Law.

After an investigation, the committee may recommend actions, including the filing of charges against the NPA attackers.

The establishment of the committee was considered among the major accomplishments reached during the recent talks in Norway. It consists of 10 members: Rene Sarmiento, Chito Gascon and Risa Baraquel from the government; Fidel Agcaoili, Connie Ledesma, and Danny Borjal from the NDF; and Mercy Contreras, Aileen Bacalzo, Marie Enriquez, and a bishop from nongovernmental organizations.

A military spokesperson said the NPA ambush was a clear violation of the Geneva Convention that banned the use of land mines in warfare.

CPP spokesperson Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal earlier said the ambush may have been staged by the NPA Romulo Jallores Command.

"We condemn in the strongest possible terms this show of insincerity by the CPP-NPA toward the government's peace initiatives," Senior Supt. Joel Goltiao, police information officer, said in a statement.

NDF warning

For his part, NDF chief negotiator Luis Jalandoni reminded Ms Macapagal that the Oslo Joint Statement bound the government in working for the removal of the CPP, NPA and Sison from international blacklists.

"We in the NDF wish to warn the Macapagal-Arroyo regime that if the agreement with the GRP on the delisting of the CPP/NPA and (Sison) would prove to be ineffective, there would be no basis for continuing the peace negotiations," Jalandoni said in a statement furnished the INQUIRER.

Jalandoni quoted the arrival statement of Secretary Teresita Deles, presidential adviser on the peace process, that "the inclusion of the CPP, NPA and Sison in foreign terror lists were sovereign acts of these states, independent of the GRP disposition regarding these matters."

He said the statement of Deles smacked of "treachery," "malice" and "deception."

"It is reprehensible for continuing to insist that the US government has the sovereign prerogative to violate the national sovereignty of the Filipino people and the territorial integrity of the Philippines by usurping jurisdiction over revolutionary entities and events in the Philippines," Jalandoni said.

"The Macapagal-Arroyo regime must not engage in deception. It must cease to insist so arrogantly that the delisting would happen only after the capitulation of the revolutionary forces. In this regard, it should not act like the yelping dog of the US."

Support efforts

Jalandoni pointed out that under the Oslo Joint Statement, the government "jointly and separately (with the NDF) shall call upon the Government of the US, the Council of the EU and other concerned foreign states and governments (Canada and Australia) to support the efforts of the GRP and the NDF in resolving the outstanding issue of the 'terrorist' listing."

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Goodwill

Ms Macapagal, who is running in the May 10 presidential election, appears eager to move the peace negotiations with the NDF forward and capitalize on the goodwill that a deal would generate.

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Weapons were taken in both attacks.

The NPA guerrillas, estimated by the military to number about 10,000 with about 7,000 firearms, have been fighting for 35 years to establish a Marxist state in one of Asia's longest-running communist insurrections. *With reports from Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau; Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.; AFP and AP*

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The Baguio Flower Festival

Panagbenga 2004

Parade of Floats

Street Dancing Competition

Landscaping Competition

The Market Encounter

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Ping: All I need is FPJ blessing

From page A1

admit the offer gave me sleepless nights. We are but human, anyway. I had to tell them right away that I was not interested."

Lacson said the offer of reimbursement was extended by a "mutual friend" who had invited Poe and him to a meeting sometime last month, way before the official campaign period started on Feb. 10.

He quoted the friend as saying that in the event of Poe's victory, Lacson would be named interior secretary and "anointed" in 2010 as the actor's successor.

There was also an offer for his political leaders to be appointed to key government positions, Lacson said.

Sought yesterday for comment, Poe's campaign spokesperson Rep. Francis Escudero (NPC, Sorsogon) pointed out that Lacson himself had said that the actor did not make the offer.

"We don't want to pick a fight with Senator Lacson," Escudero said. "FPJ has a high regard for Senator Lacson, and definitely he will not do what's now being claimed."

Escudero also noted that Poe and Lacson had earlier met privately, with no witnesses, "so nobody can claim that somebody did this or that."

Self-respect

Lacson said that he and Poe eventually did meet and that he told the actor that he was rejecting the offer.

"I told him, 'Egos can be set aside but there is such a thing as self-respect. Tell your people not to come to me again with offers of reimbursements and concessions,'" Lacson said.

He said Poe denied having authorized such an offer in exchange for his backing out of the presidential race.

He also said Poe continued to strike him as a very sincere man.

But Lacson is still smarting from the LDP leadership's decision to draft party outsider Poe as its candidate instead of putting the actor through a selection process.

"That was the only thing I asked of them," he said. "They could not even give me that. I even said that I was willing to go back to the Senate if I was not chosen standard-bearer."

'Hang on'

Lacson, chief of the Philippine National Police during the term of ousted President Joseph Estrada, expressed dismay over how the Macapagal administration and the current PNP leadership had been treating officers identified with him.

He said Directors Lucas Managuelod, Reynaldo Acop and Victor Batac and Chief Supt. Francisco Zubia could hope to revive their careers only if he were elected president.

"What can I advise them? Well, just hang on," he said.

Lacson said Managuelod and company had been on "floating" status since he left the PNP.

He said Zubia, his classmate at the Philippine Military Academy (Class 1971), was put in the "special oversight committee," an obscure panel assigned to propose reforms in the police organization. PNP insiders consider it another "freezer" for officers who have fallen out of grace.

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AFP: Politics behind Mindoro slay

By Alcuin Papa

THE MILITARY said yesterday the ambush-slaying of Naujan (Mindoro Oriental) Vice Mayor Juvy Magsino and Bayan Muna party-list group coordinator Leima Fortu last week was politically motivated.

Armed Forces of the Philippines Information Office chief Lt. Col. Daniel Lucero told reporters at a press conference that based on the evidence gathered so far, military investigators believe the killings were related to the coming elections.

"Most of the evidence gathered point to the (killing) being politically motivated and election-related," Lucero said.

He said the communist New People's Army and its front organizations "are capitalizing on the killings to undermine the credibility of the government and the AFP, and at the same time champion the cause of the NPA."

Lucero admitted the military has to improve its coordination with the Philippine National Police in areas like Mindoro Oriental to prevent further election violence.

Magsino and Fortu were shot dead on Friday night by two men on a motorcycle, several hours after they attended a K4 campaign rally which featured President Macapagal, vice presidential bet Sen. Noli de Castro and the coalition's senatorial bets in Calapan City, the provincial capital.

Magsino was a lawyer and human rights advocate and the mayoral candidate of the ruling Lakas-CMD.

The leftist Bayan Muna organization accused the AFP, particularly the 204th Infantry Brigade which is pursuing NPA guerrillas in Mindoro, of being behind the killings.

In the past, human rights organizations had accused the AFP of perpetuating the "militarization" of the island, pinning on the military the deaths of human rights activists in recent months.

As a result of anticipated election violence, candidates will be allowed to increase the number of their armed military and police bodyguards, the Commission on Elections said Tuesday.

Comelec chief Benjamin Abalos told reporters the polls agency would allow candidates to increase their security details provided they had valid reasons.

"They (candidates) could file a petition with our legal department and the committee in charge of security personnel will be the one to decide," Abalos said.

The law already provides that a candidate is allowed a minimum of two military or police security personnel.

The AFP admitted yesterday the NPA has been successful in sowing fear and terror in the countryside in the run-up to the May elections.

Lucero made the admission at the press conference after being asked his reaction to NPA spokesperson Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal's statement that candidates have been making a beeline to pay .permit to campaign fees in areas controlled by the insurgents.

He said the NPA has been stepping up its attacks in the past few days to increase its take from its extortion activities. *With an AFP report*

Icy Siberian winds behind February chills

WONDERING why it's still chilly in the early mornings and late evenings?

Bring those blankets out and curl up some more because summer won't officially start until the next few weeks, the weather bureau said yesterday.

The country is still experiencing the northeast monsoon or hanging amihan which draws "cold, dry air" from icy Siberia, China and Japan, according to a weather expert at the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration.

In Quezon City, for example, the temperature dropped to 19.5 degrees Celsius yesterday morning, the city's coldest so far this year. *Volt Contreras*

Poll exec moved to Mindanao

THE SPOKESPERSON of the Commission on Elections has been reassigned to Mindanao.

This was revealed by Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos who said that Ferdinand Rafanan, the former spokesperson, would be tasked to handle the prosecution of about 110,000 double and multiple registrants in the area.

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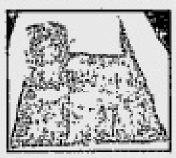

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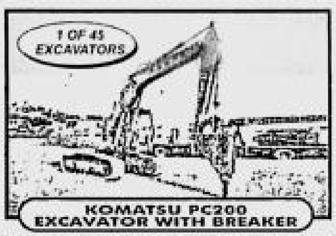

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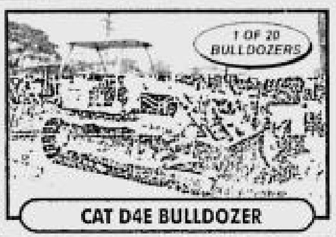

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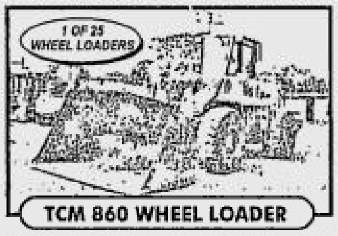
CAT D4E BULLDOZER



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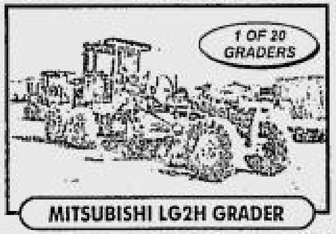

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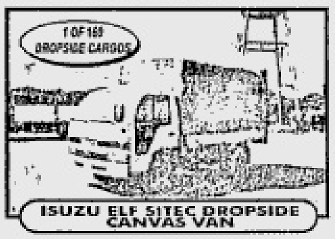

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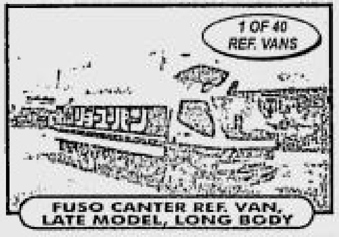

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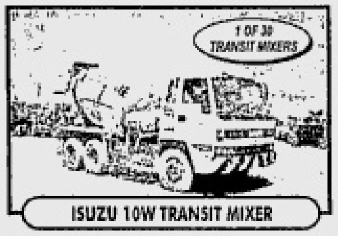

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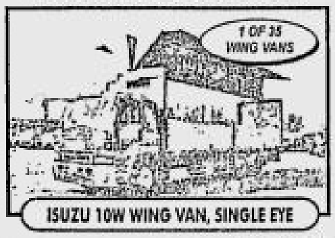

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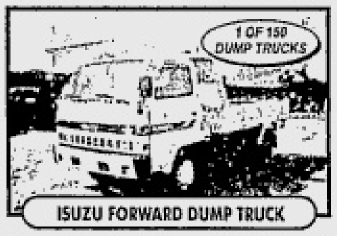

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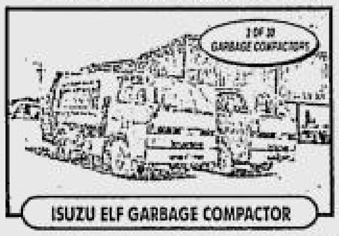

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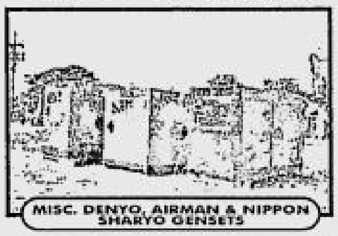

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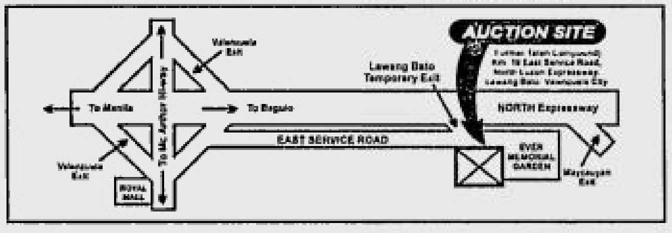

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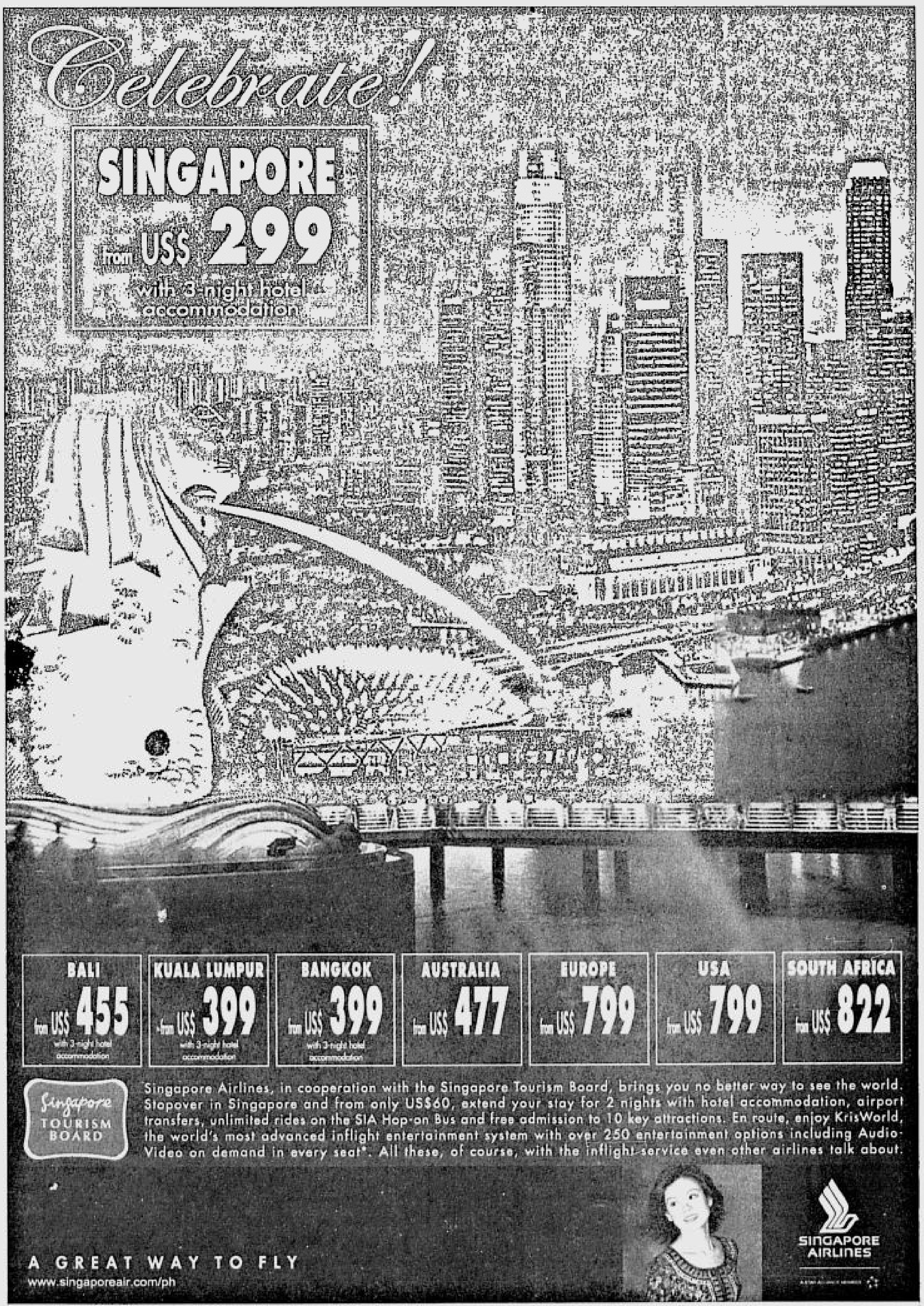

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AFP: Politics behind Mindoro slay

By Alcuin Papa

THE MILITARY said yesterday the ambush-slaying of Naujan (Mindoro Oriental) Vice Mayor Juvy Magsino and Bayan Muna party-list group coordinator Leima Fortu last week was politically motivated.

Armed Forces of the Philippines Information Office chief Lt. Col. Daniel Lucero told reporters at a press conference that based on the evidence gathered so far, military investigators believe the killings were related to the coming elections.

"Most of the evidence gathered point to the (killing) being politically motivated and election-related," Lucero said.

He said the communist New People's Army and its front organizations "are capitalizing on the killings to undermine the credibility of the government and the AFP, and at the same time champion the cause of the NPA."

Lucero admitted the military has to improve its coordination with the Philippine National Police in areas like Mindoro Oriental to prevent further election violence.

Magsino and Fortu were shot dead on Friday night by two men on a motorcycle, several hours after they attended a K4 campaign rally which featured President Macapagal, vice presidential bet Sen. Noli de Castro and the coalition's senatorial bets in Calapan City, the provincial capital.

Magsino was a lawyer and human rights advocate and the mayoral candidate of the ruling Lakas-CMD.

The leftist Bayan Muna organization accused the AFP, particularly the 204th Infantry Brigade which is pursuing NPA guerrillas in Mindoro, of being behind the killings.

In the past, human rights organizations had accused the AFP of perpetuating the "militarization" of the island, pinning on the military the deaths of human rights activists in recent months.

As a result of anticipated election violence, candidates will be allowed to increase the number of their armed military and police bodyguards, the Commission on Elections said Tuesday.

Comelec chief Benjamin Abalos told reporters the polls agency would allow candidates to increase their security details provided they had valid reasons.

"They (candidates) could file a petition with our legal department and the committee in charge of security personnel will be the one to decide," Abalos said.

The law already provides that a candidate is allowed a minimum of two military or police security personnel.

The AFP admitted yesterday the NPA has been successful in sowing fear and terror in the countryside in the run-up to the May elections.

Lucero made the admission at the press conference after being asked his reaction to NPA spokesperson Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal's statement that candidates have been making a beeline to pay .permit to campaign fees in areas controlled by the insurgents.

He said the NPA has been stepping up its attacks in the past few days to increase its take from its extortion activities. *With an AFP report*

Icy Siberian winds behind February chills

WONDERING why it's still chilly in the early mornings and late evenings?

Bring those blankets out and curl up some more because summer won't officially start until the next few weeks, the weather bureau said yesterday.

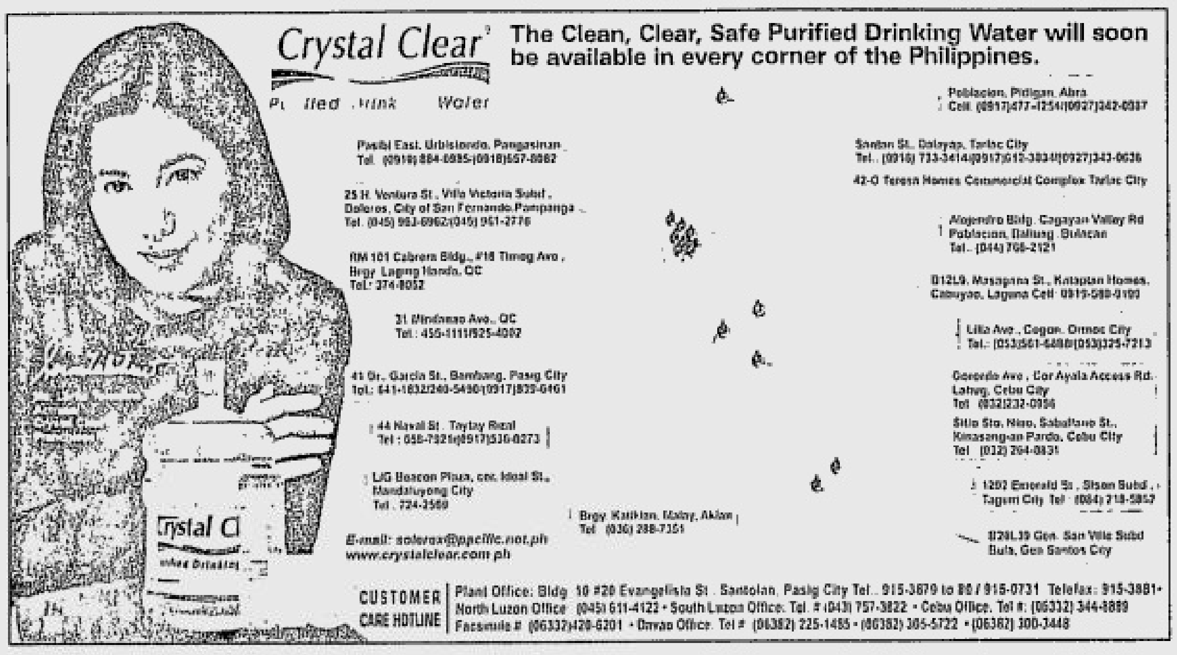
The country is still experiencing the northeast monsoon or hanging amihan which draws "cold, dry air" from icy Siberia, China and Japan, according to a weather expert at the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration.

In Quezon City, for example, the temperature dropped to 19.5 degrees Celsius yesterday morning, the city's coldest so far this year. *Volt Contreras*

Poll exec moved to Mindanao

THE SPOKESPERSON of the Commission on Elections has been reassigned to Mindanao.

This was revealed by Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos who said that Ferdinand Rafanan, the former spokesperson, would be tasked to handle the prosecution of about 110,000 double and multiple registrants in the area.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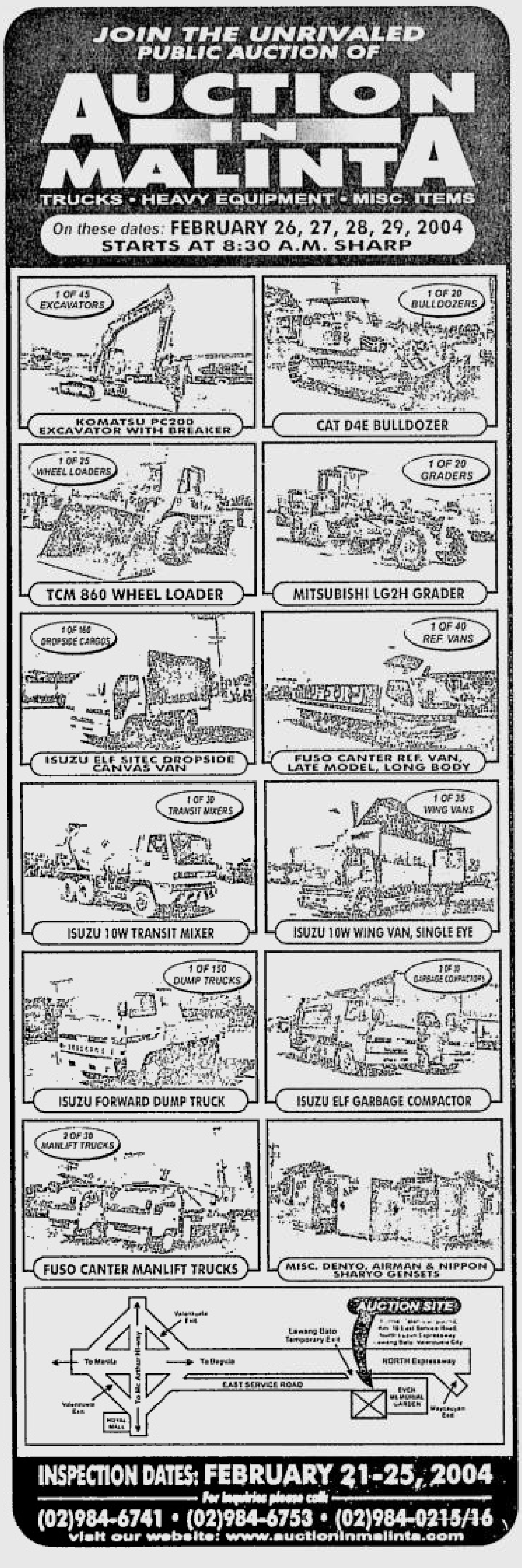
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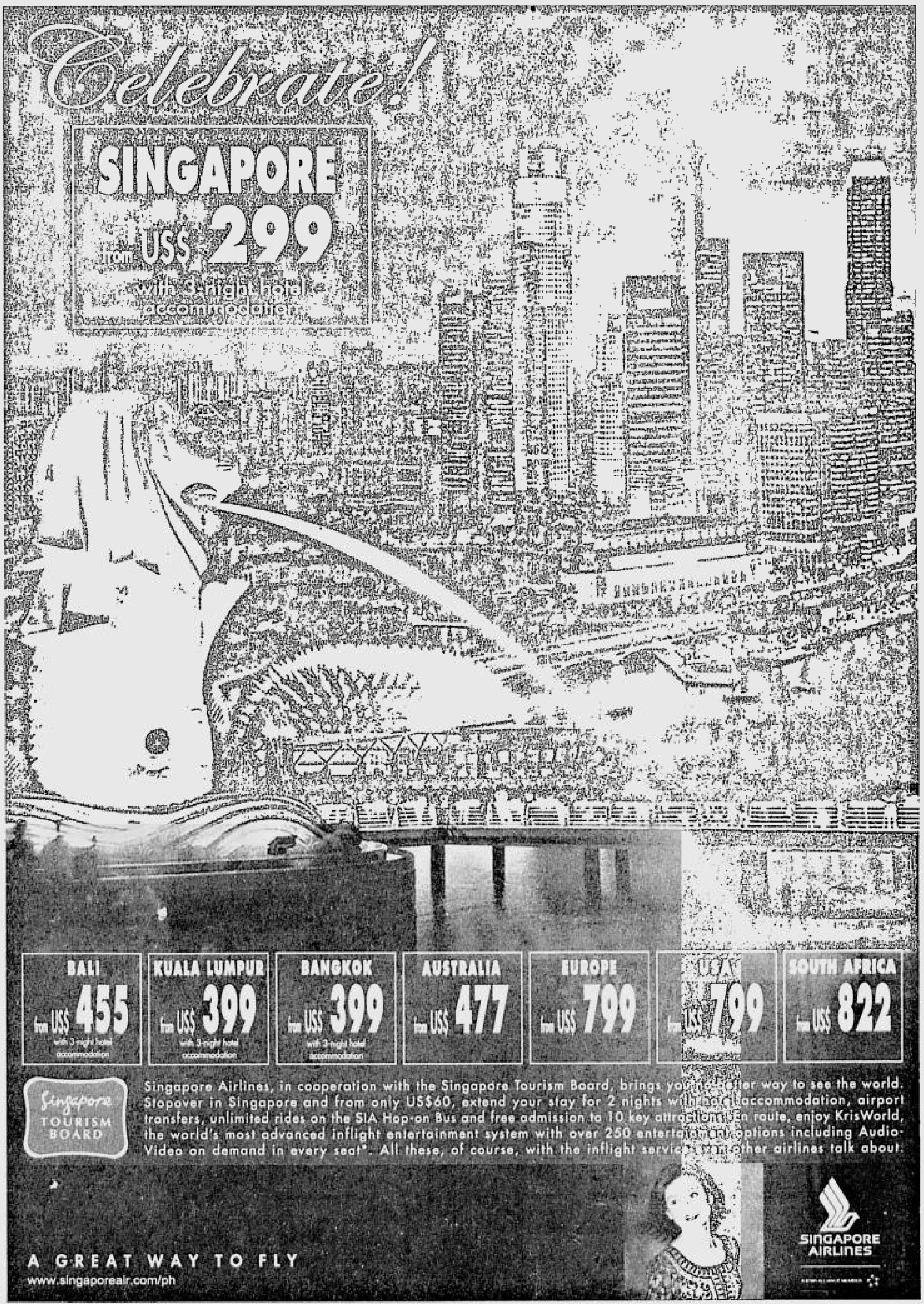
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Payoffs in Pakistan's nuke program bared

ISLAMABAD—Abdul Qadeer Khan spent hundreds of thousands of dollars to buy loyalty—writing checks for anything from seminars to friends' weddings—in a patronage scheme that allowed him to elude suspicion as head of the world's most successful nuclear black market, senior scientists and Pakistan government officials said.

Pakistan acknowledged this month that Khan sold high-tech secrets to Iran, Libya and North Korea. But signs that the grandfatherly engineer was up to something illegal had been around for years.

"If you wrote to him that 'you wanted to attend a seminar or that your daughter was getting married, he would write back and there would be a check in there for you," Pervez Hoodhboy, a physicist at Islamabad's prestigious Quaid-e-Azam University, said Monday. "Sometimes there would be $50,000 or $100,000. He was very generous and he bought a lot of support, so people didn't say anything."

Farhatullah Babar, a senator from the opposition Pakistan People's Party, who was also involved in the nuclear program early in his career, said Khan had almost total control to spend government money, and the secrecy of the nuclear program meant there was no oversight.

"The kind of vast administrative and financial powers, without any check on them, that were given to Dr. A.Q. Khan was unprecedented and unusual," he said. "The powers given to him were so great that he could use the funds however he wanted... Whoever has such great powers, it is a normal human failure to abuse them."

Pakistan is believed to have spent $5 billion on its nuclear weapons program, which it launched shortly after the 1971 war with India. It was not clear how much of the funds were controlled by Khan, but the figures certainly ran into the hundreds of millions.

Khan's supporters insist that he and six other detained nuclear officials have been made scapegoats to cover up government involvement in the nuclear leaks.

Hussam ul-Haq, chair of the Khan's Release Liaison Committee, which is lobbying on behalf of the detainees, said Monday that the 68-year-old scientist was under immense stress and had suffered a heart ailment over the weekend. *AP*

Roadside bombs kill three soldiers in Iraq

BAGHDAD—Roadside bombs have claimed more American lives, killing three US soldiers in separate attacks in Baghdad and Sunni Muslim areas to the north of the capital. At least six soldiers were injured in the attacks, one critically.

In the biggest attack, one soldier from Task Force Iron Horse was killed and four were wounded in a roadside bombing in Baqouba, 55 km northeast of Baghdad. One of the wounded was critically injured and the other three were in guarded condition, the military said.

A soldier from Task Force Olympia was killed and another wounded by a bomb Monday evening in Tall Afar in northern Iraq. A soldier from the 1st Armored Division died and another was wounded in a bombing Monday in central Baghdad.

The latest deaths brought to 541 the number of Americans who have died since President George W. Bush launched the Iraq war on March 20. Most of the casualties have occurred since Bush declared an end to active combat May 1.

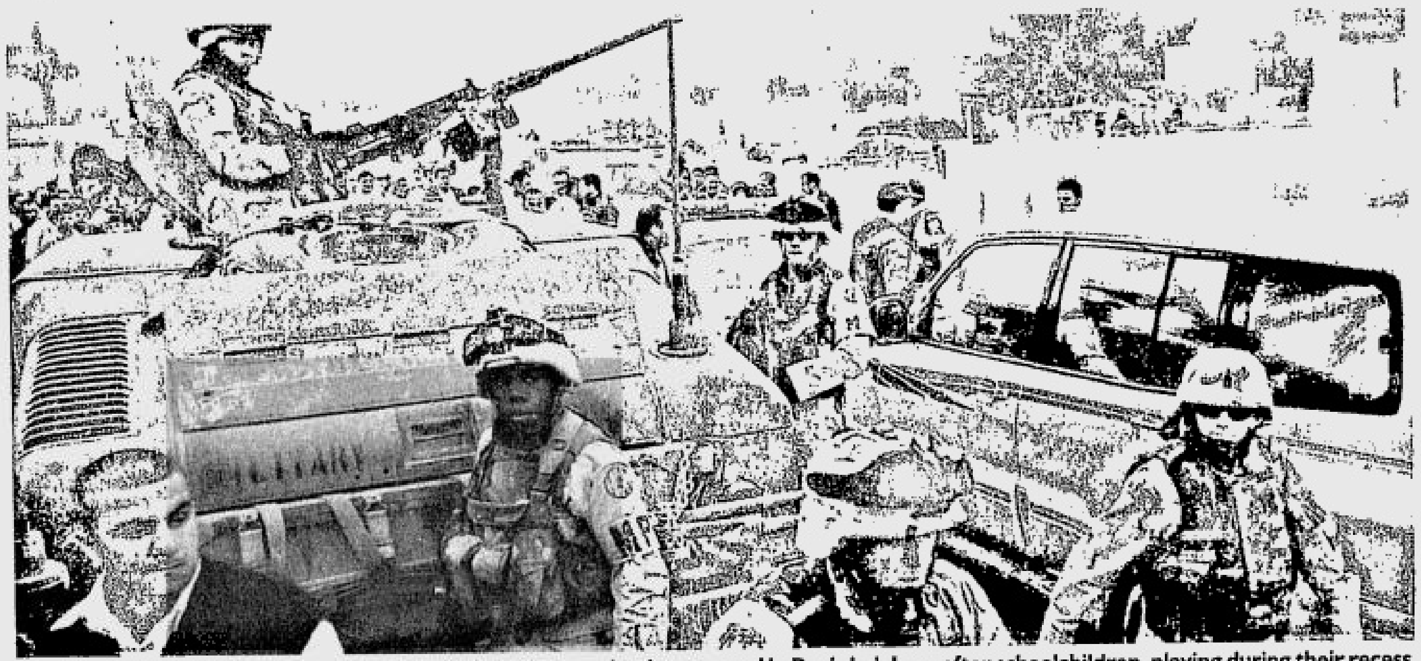
As the casualties mount, the United States and its allies are preparing to hand over sovereignty to the Iraqis by July 1, despite disagreements over the best way to choose a new government.

On Monday, US administrator L. Paul Bremer said he would move to block any effort by Iraqi leaders to put Islamic law as the foundation of legislation in the interim constitution, which is supposed to take effect at the end of February.

However, Mohsen Abdel-Hamid, the current president of the Iraqi Governing Council and a Sunni Muslim hardliner, has proposed making Islamic law the "principal basis" of legislation, which many Iraqi women's groups fear will threaten their legal rights.

"Our position is clear," Bremer said when asked what he would do if the Iraqis wrote Islamic law as the principal basis of the legal code. "It can't be law until I sign it."

Bremer must sign all measures passed by the 25-member council before they can become law, including the interim constitution. Iraq's powerful Shiite clergy, however, wants the interim constitution to be approved by an elected legislature. Under US plans, a permanent constitution would not be drawn up and voted on by the Iraqi people until 2005. *AP*



US Military Police arrive to secure the Khadimiya primary school compound in Baghdad, Iraq, after schoolchildren, playing during their recess period, accidentally detonated a grenade on Monday, which killed one child and wounded four others. AP

Thailand's wild storks die of bird flu

BANGKOK—Hundreds of wild storks have died of bird flu in Thailand while Japan on Tuesday reported new infections in chickens kept as household pets, a day after the World Health Organization said the virus crisis was far from over in Asia.

The virus has mostly infected poultry, prompting Asian governments to slaughter tens of millions of chickens and other fowl in containment efforts. The disease also has jumped to people in Vietnam and Thailand, killing 20.

The open-billed storks found dead at two bird sanctuaries on the outskirts of the Thai capital were migratory birds, which WHO has said could be responsible for spreading bird flu.

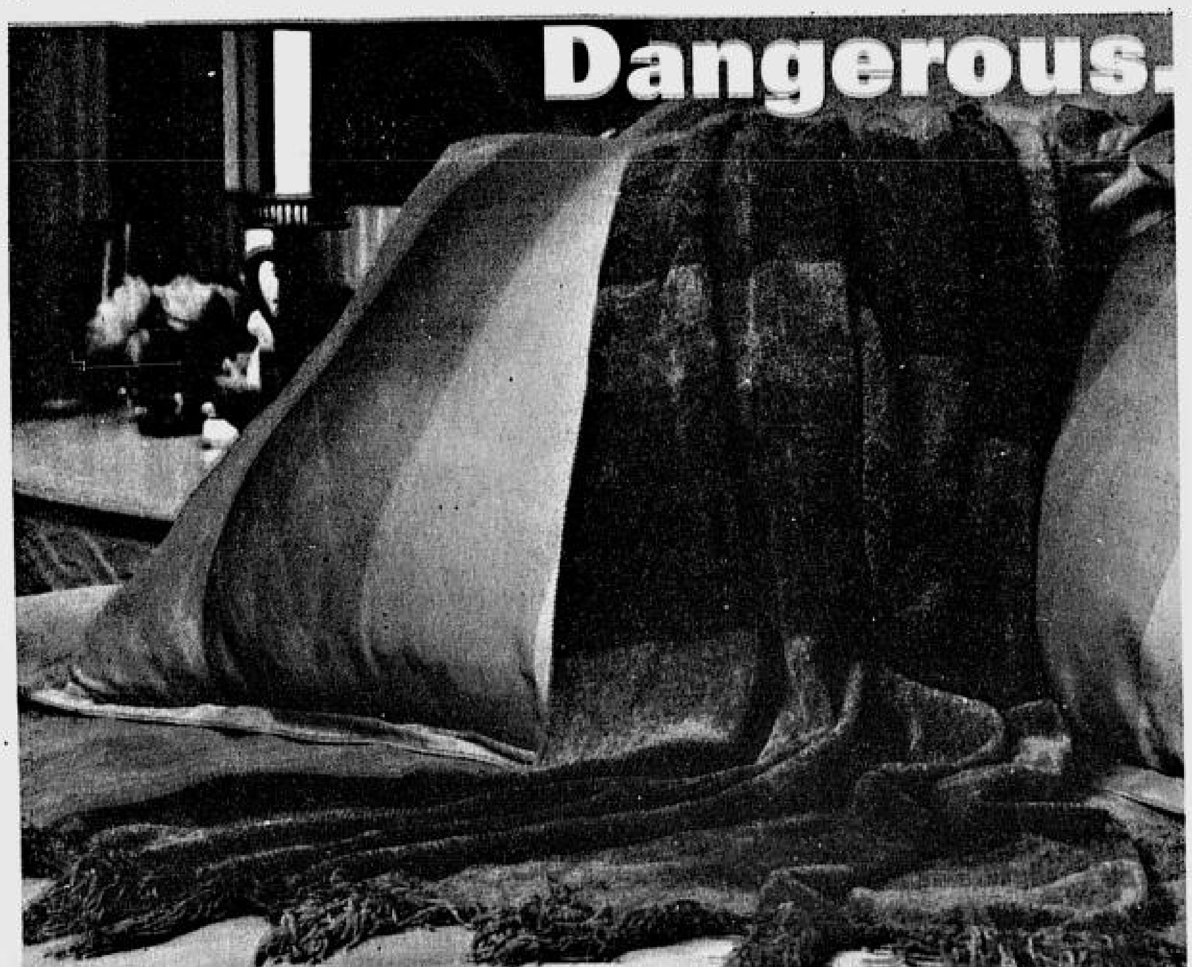
Thai officials said they were monitoring the sanctuaries but would not immediately kill other birds there for fear of prompting them to fly away, thus increasing the risk of spreading the disease elsewhere.

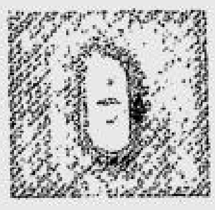
"I cannot say whether in the near future we have to kill them or not," a Natural Resources and Environment Ministry official said on condition of anonymity.

The WHO said Monday that Asia is still far from clear of the disease.

China, Cambodia, Japan, Indonesia, Laos, Pakistan, South Korea, Thailand, Taiwan and Vietnam have been hit by bird flu. Pakistan and Taiwan are reporting a milder strain of the virus.

"The outbreak is not going to be contained in one or two months," D.N. Kumara Rai, head of the WHO's communicable disease department in Southeast Asia, said. *AP*





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LA archdiocese reveals 7 decades of sex abuse

NEW YORK—The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Los Angeles—the nation's largest—released a detailed study Tuesday on sex abuse of minors by its clergy since 1930, reporting among the highest number of claims against a US diocese to date.

Los Angeles church officials say that, over the decades, they received allegations from 656 people who said they had been molested by 244 priests, deacons, religious brothers, seminarians and one other person.

More than 5,000 priests worked in the archdiocese during that period.

Cardinal Roger Mahony compiled the report as part of an unprecedented, nationwide accounting of abuse cases commissioned by America's bishops to help ease two years of crisis over molestation in the church.

"The archdiocese has committed significant resources to help those who were harmed to recover from their horrible experiences," the report said. "We hope our efforts will help, but we realize that only the grace of God can provide the complete healing the victims need."

The national study of which Los Angeles' numbers are a part is scheduled for release Feb. 27, and some bishops already have started revealing their local figures.

Reporters from have been tracking those numbers and have found that, including Los Angeles, 85 dioceses have reported claims so far against 1,657 clergy since 1950. *AP*

Probe of Moscow roof collapse set; graft eyed

MOSCOW—Prosecutors on Monday confiscated documents from firms involved in the construction of a vast Moscow water park left in ruins after the roof collapsed, a disaster that threw a spotlight on the graft said to be rife in the city's construction business.

Twenty-five people were confirmed dead in the accident, which occurred Saturday night. Moscow city prosecutor Vladimir Yudin said four or five people remained unaccounted for. Initially, officials had given a higher figure, but later said that some of those reported missing had been located.

President Vladimir Putin offered his condolences to the victims, saying "the culprits must be punished," while Deputy Prime Minister Vladimir Yakovlev called for tougher punishment for those convicted of negligence in construction. Currently, the maximum sentence is five years in prison.

Prosecutors, who have opened a criminal investigation into negligence leading to the deaths, confiscated documents from the architecture and construction companies Monday and collected roof debris for analysis.

A government panel investigating the collapse said it would be ready to issue its preliminary findings by the end of the week.

"Their main task is to look at the foundation, the analysis of the ground conditions, and the design decisions taken... the quality of metal and concrete used," said Nikolai Koshman, the chief of the government agency in charge of construction. *AP*

New form of mad cow discovered

WASHINGTON—Italian scientists have found a second form of mad cow disease that more closely resembles the human Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease than does the usual cow form of the illness.

The brain-wasting diseases BSE, known as mad cow disease, and human CJD are caused by different forms of mutant proteins called prions. A number of people, mainly in England, have also suffered from what is called variant CJD, a brain disease believed to be acquired by eating meat from infected cows. No Americans have been reported with variant CJD.

Now, the team of Italian researchers reports a study of eight cows with mad cow disease found that two of them had brain damage resembling that in the human victims of CJD. They said the cows were infected with prions that resembled those involved in the standard form of the human disease, called sporadic CJD, not the variant caused by eating infected meat.

Salvatore Monaco, lead author of the new study, said the findings may indicate that cattle can also develop a sporadic form of the disease, but it might also be a new food-borne form of the illness.

Dr. Paul Brown of the National Institutes of Health said the finding does not indicate an increased threat to humans.

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Both the human and cattle diseases cause holes to form in the brain. The Italian researchers found that, in addition to the holes, two cows had an accumulation of amyloid plaque in their brains. Amyloid plaques are an indication of Alzheimer's disease in humans. *AP*

The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Payoffs in Pakistan's nuke program bared

ISLAMABAD—Abdul Qadeer Khan spent hundreds of thousands of dollars to buy loyalty—writing checks for anything from seminars to friends' weddings—in a patronage scheme that allowed him to elude suspicion as head of the world's most successful nuclear black market, senior scientists and Pakistan government officials said.

Pakistan acknowledged this month that Khan sold high-tech secrets to Iran, Libya and North Korea. But signs that the grandfatherly engineer was up to something illegal had been around for years.

"If you wrote to him that you wanted to attend a seminar or that your daughter was getting married, he would write back and there would be a check in there for you," Pervez Hoodhboy, a physicist at Islamabad's prestigious Quaid-e-Azam University, said Monday. "Sometimes there would be $50,000 or $100,000. He was very generous and he bought a lot of support, so people didn't say anything."

Farhatullah Babar, a senator from the opposition Pakistan People's Party, who was also involved in the nuclear program early in his career, said Khan had almost total control to spend government money, and the secrecy of the nuclear program meant there was no oversight.

"The kind of vast administrative and financial powers, without any check on them, that were given to Dr. A.Q. Khan was unprecedented and unusual," he said. "The powers given to him were so great that he could use the funds however he wanted... Whoever has such great powers, it is a normal human failure to abuse them."

Pakistan is believed to have spent $5 billion on its nuclear weapons program, which it launched shortly after the 1971 war with India. It was not clear how much of the funds were controlled by Khan, but the figures certainly ran into the hundreds of millions.

Khan's supporters insist that he and six other detained nuclear officials have been made scapegoats to cover up government involvement in the nuclear leaks.

Hussam ul-Haq, chair of the Khan's Release Liaison Committee, which is lobbying on behalf of the detainees, said Monday that the 68-year-old scientist was under immense stress and had suffered a heart ailment over the weekend. *AP*

Roadside bombs kill three soldiers in Iraq

BAGHDAD—Roadside bombs have claimed more American lives, killing three US soldiers in separate attacks in Baghdad and Sunni Muslim areas to the north of the capital. At least six soldiers were injured in the attacks, one critically.

In the biggest attack, one soldier from Task Force Iron Horse was killed and four were wounded in a roadside bombing in Baqouba, 55 km northeast of Baghdad. One of the wounded was critically injured and the other three were in guarded condition, the military said.

A soldier from Task Force Olympia was killed and another wounded by a bomb Monday evening in Tall Afar in northern Iraq. A soldier from the 1st Armored Division died and another was wounded in a bombing Monday in central Baghdad.

The latest deaths brought to 541 the number of Americans who have died since President George W. Bush launched the Iraq war on March 20. Most of the casualties have occurred since Bush declared an end to active combat May 1.

As the casualties mount, the United States and its allies are preparing to hand over sovereignty to the Iraqis by July 1, despite disagreements over the best way to choose a new government.

On Monday, US administrator L. Paul Bremer said he would move to block any effort by Iraqi leaders to put Islamic law as the foundation of legislation in the interim constitution, which is supposed to take effect at the end of February.

However, Mohsen Abdel-Hamid, the current president of the Iraqi Governing Council and a Sunni Muslim hardliner, has proposed making Islamic law the "principal basis" of legislation, which many Iraqi women's groups fear will threaten their legal rights.

"Our position is clear," Bremer said when asked what he would do if the Iraqis wrote Islamic law as the principal basis of the legal code. "It can't be law until I sign it."

Bremer must sign all measures passed by the 25-member council before they can become law, including the interim constitution. Iraq's powerful Shiite clergy, however, wants the interim constitution to be approved by an elected legislature. Under US plans, a permanent constitution would not be drawn up and voted on by the Iraqi people until 2005. *AP*

US Military Police arrive to secure the Khadimiya primary school compound in Baghdad, Iraq, after schoolchildren, playing during their recess period, accidentally detonated a grenade on Monday, which killed one child and wounded four others. AP

Thailand's wild storks die of bird flu

BANGKOK—Hundreds of wild storks have died of bird flu in Thailand while Japan on Tuesday reported new infections in chickens kept as household pets, a day after the World Health Organization said the virus crisis was far from over in Asia.

The virus has mostly infected poultry, prompting Asian governments to slaughter tens of millions of chickens and other fowl in containment efforts. The disease also has jumped to people in Vietnam and Thailand, killing 20.

The open-billed storks found dead at two bird sanctuaries on the outskirts of the Thai capital were migratory birds, which WHO has said could be responsible for spreading bird flu.

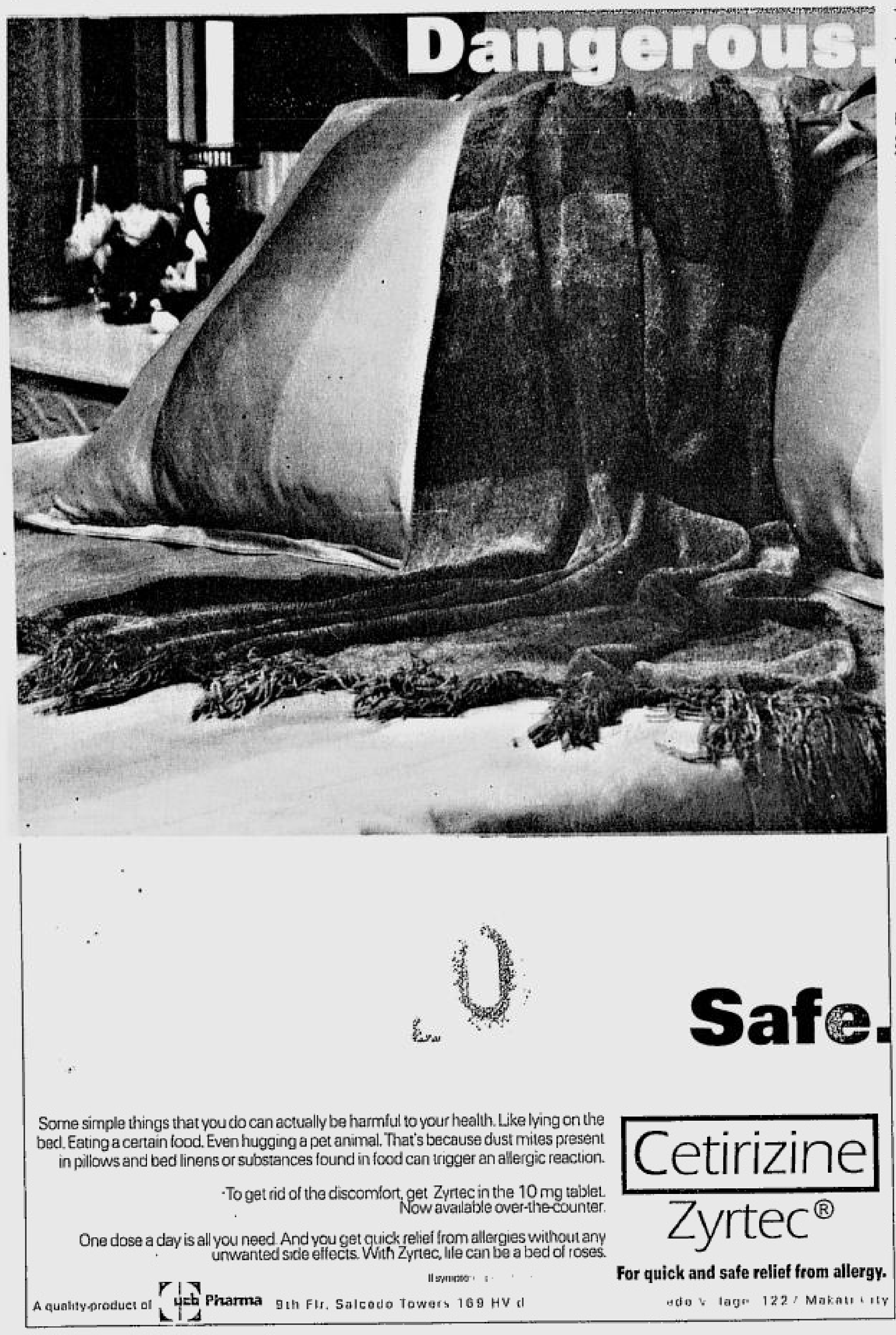
Thai officials said they were monitoring the sanctuaries but would not immediately kill other birds there for fear of prompting them to fly away, thus increasing the risk of spreading the disease elsewhere.

"I cannot say whether in the near future we have to kill them or not," a Natural Resources and Environment Ministry official said on condition of anonymity.

The WHO said Monday that Asia is still far from clear of the disease.

China, Cambodia, Japan, Indonesia, Laos, Pakistan, South Korea, Thailand, Taiwan and Vietnam have been hit by bird flu. Pakistan and Taiwan are reporting a milder strain of the virus.

"The outbreak is not going to be contained in one or two months," D.N. Kumara Rai, head of the WHO's communicable disease department in Southeast Asia, said. *AP*



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LA archdiocese reveals 7 decades of sex abuse

NEW YORK—The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Los Angeles—the nation's largest—released a detailed study Tuesday on sex abuse of minors by its clergy since 1930, reporting among the highest number of claims against a US diocese to date.

Los Angeles church officials say that, over the decades, they received allegations from 656 people who said they had been molested by 244 priests, deacons, religious brothers, seminarians and one other person.

More than 5,000 priests worked in the archdiocese during that period.

Cardinal Roger Mahony compiled the report as part of an unprecedented, nationwide accounting of abuse cases commissioned by America's bishops to help ease two years of crisis over molestation in the church.

"The archdiocese has committed significant resources to help those who were harmed to recover from their horrible experiences," the report said. "We hope our efforts will help, but we realize that only the grace of God can provide the complete healing the victims need."

The national study of which Los Angeles' numbers are a part is scheduled for release Feb. 27, and some bishops already have started revealing their local figures.

Reporters from have been tracking those numbers and have found that, including Los Angeles, 85 dioceses have reported claims so far against 1,657 clergy since 1950. *AP*

Probe of Moscow roof collapse set; graft eyed

MOSCOW—Prosecutors on Monday confiscated documents from firms involved in the construction of a vast Moscow water park left in ruins after the roof collapsed, a disaster that threw a spotlight on the graft said to be rife in the city's construction business.

Twenty-five people were confirmed dead in the accident, which occurred Saturday night. Moscow city prosecutor Vladimir Yudin said four or five people remained unaccounted for. Initially, officials had given a higher figure, but later said that some of those reported missing had been located.

President Vladimir Putin offered his condolences to the victims, saying "the culprits must be punished," while Deputy Prime Minister Vladimir Yakovlev called for tougher punishment for those convicted of negligence in construction. Currently, the maximum sentence is five years in prison.

Prosecutors, who have opened a criminal investigation into negligence leading to the deaths, confiscated documents from the architecture and construction companies Monday and collected roof debris for analysis.

A government panel investigating the collapse said it would be ready to issue its preliminary findings by the end of the week.

"Their main task is to look at the foundation, the analysis of the ground conditions, and the design decisions taken... the quality of metal and concrete used," said Nikolai Koshman, the chief of the government agency in charge of construction. *AP*

New form of mad cow discovered

WASHINGTON—Italian scientists have found a second form of mad cow disease that more closely resembles the human Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease than does the usual cow form of the illness.

The brain-wasting diseases BSE, known as mad cow disease, and human CJD are caused by different forms of mutant proteins called prions. A number of people, mainly in England, have also suffered from what is called variant CJD, a brain disease believed to be acquired by eating meat from infected cows. No Americans have been reported with variant CJD.

Now, the team of Italian researchers reports a study of eight cows with mad cow disease found that two of them had brain damage resembling that in the human victims of CJD. They said the cows were infected with prions that resembled those involved in the standard form of the human disease, called sporadic CJD, not the variant caused by eating infected meat.

Salvatore Monaco, lead author of the new study, said the findings may indicate that cattle can also develop a sporadic form of the disease, but it might also be a new food-borne form of the illness.

Dr. Paul Brown of the National Institutes of Health said the finding does not indicate an increased threat to humans.

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Both the human and cattle diseases cause holes to form in the brain. The Italian researchers found that, in addition to the holes, two cows had an accumulation of amyloid plaque in their brains. Amyloid plaques are an indication of Alzheimer's disease in humans. *AP*

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

FARTHEST GALAXY
A team of astronomers may have set a new record in discovering what is the most distant known galaxy in the universe. Located an estimated 13 billion light-years away, the object is being viewed at a time only 750 million years after the Big Bang. The primeval galaxy was identified by combining the power of Nasa's Hubble Space Telescope and Cara's W. M. Keck Telescopes on Mauna Kea in Hawaii. REUTERS

Britain warns vs Saudi terror attacks

LONDON—Terrorists may be "in the final stages" of preparing more attacks in Saudi Arabia, the British government warned on Monday, advising its citizens not to travel to the country.

The unusually strong-worded statement followed the cancellation of a British Airways flight from London to the Saudi capital, Riyadh, on Monday, which was called off last week due to unspecified security fears.

"Following terrorist attacks in Riyadh in May and November 2003, we believe that terrorists remain determined to carry out further attacks in Saudi Arabia and that these may be in the final stages of preparation," the foreign office said on its website.

"We advise British nationals against all but essential travel to Saudi Arabia," it said in updated travel advice for the country.

"The threat includes, but is not limited to, residential compounds," it added.

"British Airways cancelled its 16 February BA 263 flight to Riyadh for security reasons. The reciprocal flight, BA 262, on 17 February not affected."

The Foreign Office has issued a string of warnings to its citizens about Saudi Arabia in the wake of a series of attacks there blamed on Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida network.

In May last year, a triple suicide bomb attack in Riyadh killed 34 people, and a further 17 perished in November in a bombing at a housing compound in the city. *AFP*

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Heavy antibiotics use by women risky, says study

CHICAGO—Women among the heaviest users of antibiotics may be at greater risk for breast cancer, the most common cancer among women worldwide, a study released Monday said.

The US study showed that women who had taken antibiotics for 500 days over a 17-year period were twice as likely to develop breast cancer as women who had taken none.

Women who took up to 500 antibiotics over the same period were about 1.5 times more likely to develop this type of cancer were as non-users, according to the study of more than 10,000 women for the Journal of the American Medical Association.

The risk grew with longer-duration antibiotic use. Results were the same for different kinds of antibiotics.

The study did not explain the link, but the authors gave a number of possibilities.

"It may be that women who take a lot of antibiotics have some other processes happening in their bodies, such as a weak immune response or a hormonal imbalance, which may be an underlying cause of breast cancer," said paper co-author Christine Velicer, of the Center for Health Studies, in Seattle, Washington.

Or antibiotics may harm bacteria in the intestine, preventing certain foods from protecting the body against cancer, she suggested.

The paper's authors said it was too early to draw conclusions about the medical and public health implications of their findings, but called for further research to explore the reasons for the link. *AFP*

WORLDBRIEFS

India, Pakistan peace talks

ISLAMABAD—Nuclear-armed rivals India and Pakistan took peace talks into a second day Tuesday, working on a timetable for a sustained dialogue to resolve the decades-old Kashmir dispute and other hot-button issues. Arun Kumar Singh, leader of the Indian Foreign Ministry team, met with Pakistani Foreign Secretary Riaz Khokhar and reviewed the progress made in the talks so far. The two delegations then drove to Murree, a hill resort 50 km northeast of Islamabad, the Pakistani capital, for luncheon talks, a Pakistani diplomat said on condition of anonymity. The three-day talks are expected to establish eight groups to settle a half-century of tensions that have led to three wars, and almost burst into a fourth in 2002 before international mediation averted the conflict. *AP*

Aristide appeals for help

GONAIVES, Haiti—Former soldiers took Haiti's rebellion to the key central city of Hinche, torching the police station and freeing prisoners as President Jean-Bertrand Aristide appealed for international help to end an 11-day-old uprising. Rebels now control most roads leading in and out of the Artibonite, Haiti's breadbasket and home to almost 1 million people, and have cut off northern Haiti by chasing police from a dozen towns. "Blood has flowed in Hinche," Aristide told reporters at a news conference late Monday, saying he had asked for technical assistance from the Organization of American States. "It may be that the police cannot cope with this kind of attack." Witnesses said about 50 rebels descended Monday on the station in Hinche and killed three officers before the police fled the city of 50,000. Hinche is about 112 km northeast of Port-au-Prince. *AP*

5 killed in Indon quake

JAKARTA—Five people including a mother and child died when a powerful earthquake hit the Indonesian island of Sumatra on Monday, the head of the Indonesian national earthquake center said Tuesday. The quake measuring 5.6 on the Richter scale hit the western Padangpanjang region at 9:44 p.m., Fauzi said. The official, who like many Indonesians only uses one name, said five people died while two others were seriously injured and five slightly hurt. "There are several houses collapsed," Fauzi said. At least 70 homes in the Batipuh area of Padangpanjang were badly damaged by the quake, said Erwin, an official with the meteorological and geophysics office in the effected town. "A lot of people here are a bit traumatized from last night's quake," Erwin said. A series of weaker aftershocks followed the quake, which was centered about 8 km southeast of Padangpanjang, a town about 70 km north of the West Sumatra capital of Padang. *AFP*

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Editor in Chief **LETTY JIMENEZ-MAGSANOC**
Managing Editor **JOSE MA. D. NOLASCO**
Associate Editor **ABELARDO S. ULANDAY**
News Editor **ARTEMIO T. ENGRACIA JR.** • Chief, News Day Desk **NILO B. PAUROM**
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Men on a mission?

EDITORIAL

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo's new appointees to the Commission on Elections seem to be in a great hurry to either earn their keep or prove their critics right—or both. With their first official act, Election Commissioners Manuel Barcelona and Virgilio Garcillano have shown that they are men on a mission. Their mission: to ensure that Ms Macapagal wins a full term in the May elections.

Barely a week after they were sworn into office, Barcelona and Garcillano submitted their opinion on the disqualification case against actor Fernando Poe Jr. The two new election officials urged the Supreme Court to disqualify the opposition presidential candidate on the ground that he was born illegitimate and therefore took his mother's American citizenship. Garcillano said that it was "a rule long settled by the Supreme Court that only legitimate children follow the citizenship of the father and that illegitimate children are under the parental authority of the mother and follow her nationality." Barcelona said substantially the same thing: Since Poe was born illegitimate, "he did not acquire the Filipino citizenship of his father." Both were joined in their dissenting opinion by Commissioner Florentino Tuason, another Macapagal appointee to the Comelec.

What is most curious about this voluntary sharing of their views on this raging controversy is that they were never solicited by the Court. What it sought was the comment of the election body, and that means the arguments of the majority which had earlier voted to throw out the petition for Poe's disqualification.

So why did the three election commissioners feel a need to give their two cents' worth? The justices have appointed four *amici curiae* (friends of the court) to help them decide the case. Not one of them was named Barcelona, Garcillano or Tuason. Which was only right, for as things turned out, that was all their comments were worth—two cents. They added nothing new to the arguments Victorino Fornier and the other lawyers questioning Poe's citizenship have made.

In speaking out of turn, the only thing that the commissioners showed was that they are willing to do things they believe pleasing to Malacañang. Worse, it tends to confirm the opposition's claim that Malacañang has packed the Comelec with loyalists who would do anything to make Ms Macapagal win.

The integrity, competence and independence of the new Comelec commissioners were already questioned right after their appointment was announced. Opposition Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. charged that as Comelec regional director, Garcillano was a key figure in the *dagdag-bawas* operation that cost him a Senate seat in 1995. Other critics claimed that Barcelona was a major contributor to the campaign kitty of Ms Macapagal when she ran for vice president in 1998. Now the worst suspicions of the opposition are being confirmed by their unsolicited opinion favoring the disqualification of the leading candidate for president.

Presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye has been pleading with the opposition and other administration critics to give the new commissioners a chance to prove themselves. The problem is, this is one time when it would be foolish to take chances with people of questionable integrity and loyalties. The Comelec cannot afford another blow to its credibility and capacity to hold clean and honest elections. The opposition cannot be expected to risk being cheated of victory. And the Filipino cannot gamble on the chance that chaos and violence might follow if the elections were tainted by fraud.

Malacañang can deny all it can that it had any sinister designs when it picked Barcelona and Garcillano over some better-known nominees like Education Undersecretary Chito Gascon. But the recent action of the two new officials only tends to confirm the growing public perception that the administration is leaving nothing to chance to ensure victory in May.

Anti-democratic

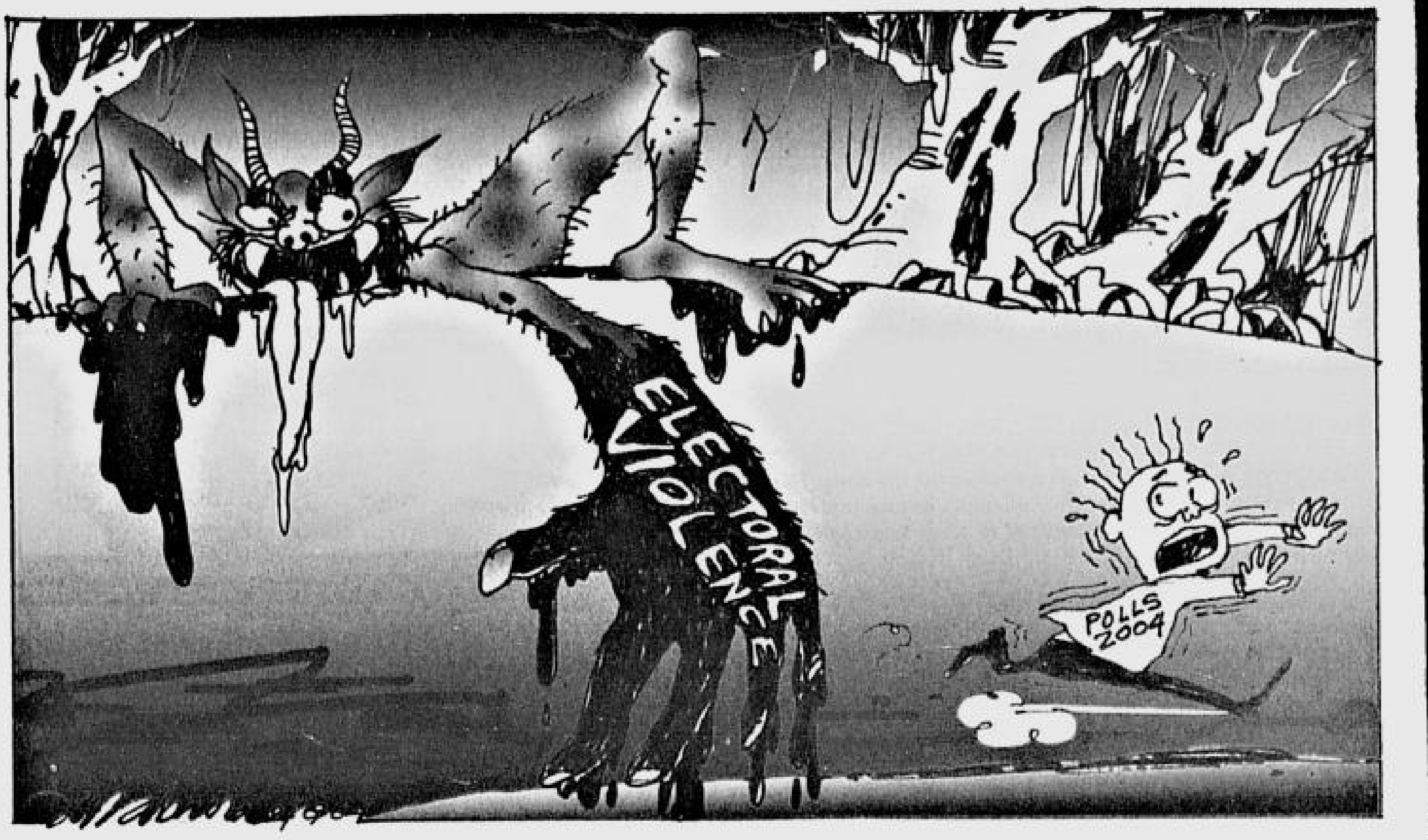
FOREIGN COMMENT

WHATEVER any one of us may think of Haiti's president, Jean Bertrand Aristide, and even with the flaws in the Haitian electoral system, there is no doubt that Aristide's election in 2000 was legitimate.

Now, armed thugs have taken over several Haitian towns seeking what was not achieved via the ballot box—the departure of Aristide two years ahead of the completion of his term...

This kind of candy-store democracy must not be countenanced and those who attempt to practice it must hear the echoe's from all around, that they will not be welcomed at the table of democrats.

Jamaica Observer (Kingston, Jamaica)



Disqualification may boomerang against GMA

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

HAH! the two new appointees of President Macapagal-Arroyo to the Commission on Elections have shown their true colors, exclaimed a Fernando Poe Jr. supporter yesterday. He was referring of course to Commissioners Virgilio Garcillano and Manuel Barcelona who had written the Supreme Court asking it to disqualify FPJ. Their opinions dissented from the majority opinion of the Comelec en banc urging the tribunal to dismiss the disqualification petitions.

"That's what they were appointed to the Comelec for," added another FPJ fan, referring to Garcillano and Barcelona. "That's their assignment."

Their arguments paralleled those of the petitioners, that FPJ, being illegitimate, follows the citizenship of his American mother. While agreeing that legitimacy brought about by the marriage of the parents retroacts to the birth of the child, citizenship is not included "in the bundle of rights conferred by civil laws on children who have acquired the status of legitimate child through legal fiction," the two commissioners said.

To which retired Supreme Court Justice Vicente Mendoza, one of the "friends of the court" invited by the tribunal to comment on the case, said that the disqualification petition should be dismissed. He was referring to lawyer Victorino Fornier who had elevated the case to the Supreme Court after losing his case in the Comelec.

"He came before the Comelec, and now the Supreme Court, with filthy hands by presenting falsified exhibits and using these as his basis for his arguments," said former Justice Secretary Estelito Mendoza, Poe's lawyer.

The "centerpiece" of Fornier's petition was the marriage certificate of Poe Sr. to one Paulita Gomez, which has been "established to be spurious, a manufactured document," Mendoza said. "...To this date, no one has come forward to say he or she is a relative of Paulita Gomez. A person married to a famous actor would at least have friends or surviving relatives who know of her marriage to Poe Sr.," he added.

"Poe believes he is a natural-born Filipino... He registered and voted during elections. He was issued and used his Philippine passport. He has committed acts reserved only for Filipino citizens like owning real estate," Mendoza said. "In all his personal and business transactions, he has clearly and consistently indicated his citizenship as Filipino." Legitimacy was beside the point in being a Filipino, he added.

"Nowhere in the 1935, 1973 and 1987 Constitution does it say that only legitimate children are Filipinos from birth."

Optimists believe that the high court will decide for legitimacy but there are pessimists who think that there is the possibility that the Court will rule otherwise. What happens then?

It will be a technical knockout against FPJ, and GMA supporters will dance in the streets and toast one another with champagne, but the fight won't be over. It doesn't mean GMA would be the runaway winner. On the contrary, FPJ's disqualification may boomerang against her. People would be so angry at the "injustice" that they would vote for anybody but GMA.

FPJ's political party can substitute another candidate for him until the eve of the elections and all the votes cast for FPJ will be credited to the substitute. That substitute could be Ping Lacson or, as senatorial candidate Ernesto Maceda suggested, FPJ's wife Susan Roces. Why not? She could be another Cory Aquino who substituted for her assassinated husband Ninoy. The people were so angered by the loss of Ninoy that they voted overwhelmingly for Cory despite the fact that she had no experience in governance. The people were proven right. Until now, Cory has been untainted by scandal during her administration, unlike other former presidents.

Or there is APJ, which is only one letter away from FPJ. APJ stands for Aquilino Pimentel Jr. "It is the closest to FPJ, why look farther?" Pimentel joked at the Kapihan sa Manila last Monday.

In short, TKOing FPJ through a partisan referee may not be good for GMA at all. On the contrary, it may be very bad for her. Even if she is not the mastermind of the plot (and the people will see it as a conspiracy), she would be blamed for it. FPJ's disqualification can be compared to Ninoy's assassination. The people will be so infuriated by it that they would vote against, not for, the reelectionist president, as they did to Marcos in 1986.

* * *

Something has to be done about the illegal posters of candidates scattered all over the country. Nobody is heeding the Comelec. And it encourages others to violate the laws because nothing happens to the violators anyway. These violators are seeking our votes to enforce and protect the laws of the country but they are the first to violate them.

Ironically, they include the highest official of the land, President Macapagal. Her posters and those of Noli de Castro hang illegally along Quezon and Commonwealth Avenues and around the Quezon Memorial Park in Quezon City. Lacson's posters are illegally posted on Visayas and Katipunan Avenues.

The worst part of the posters of these candidates is that they are nailed to the trunks of trees, not merely pasted or tied to them. The nails puncture the bark of the trees and allow bacteria and viruses to infect the trees just like germs entering our bodies through breaks in the skin. Environment Secretary Elisea Gozun has warned candidates not to wound the trees but they seem to spite the DENR. The illegal posters nailed to the trees on Visayas Avenue and Quezon Park are literally within spitting distance of the DENR offices on Visayas Avenue and can be seen from the windows of Secretary Gozun's office. But nobody is doing anything about these violations.

'Riles'

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

I ONCE wrote that the reason we can't solve poverty is that we do not see it. Or more specifically we do not see the poor. What technocrats see are statistical aggregates of slum dwellers, unemployed and potential contributors to peace-and-order problems. What business sees is a mass market or lack of it, and a labor supply that can be hired for a song. What politicians see are potential voters, what recruiters see are potential victims, what revolutionaries see are potential rebels.

We ourselves do not see them. They are shadows that flit by, without form or face. Nobody really notices the ragged children who sleep the sleep of the drugged on sidewalks or the ones who elude cars like matadors elude bulls, except when one is driving and does not like to gore the matadors. Nobody really notices the sampaguita vendors, the women who sell *pamparegla* and various elixirs beside churches, the blurry forms that shout *balut* or *chicharon* along dark alleys and drinking places, except when they end up in the Metro page as victim or wreaker of death. Nobody notices the horde huddled beside the railroad tracks, the trains that rumble by almost grazing the outstretched tin roofs of their shacks, living lives as dark and smelly as the rat holes they seem to crawl out from, except when they do crawl out into the sunlight to storm Mendiola.

We know they are there. But they are just collateral sounds and visuals, like the hum of traffic that buzzes in our ears at night or the sights that rush by while our bus pushes and shoves its way to God-knows-where.

Well, one movie has pinned down those flitting sounds and visions and given them face and form. And compelled us to look at them not just with fascinated horror but with uninhibited compassion. That movie is "Riles."

It is actually a documentary, and a most gripping one. Yes, documentaries can be that too, contrary to rumor. "Riles" is right up there with Michael Moore's Oscar-winning "Bowling for Columbine." As its title suggests, "Riles'" subject is the jumble of furtive bodies and twisted metal fused into one that occupies space by the railroad track at the heart, or bowels, of the city. "Riles" extricates the animate from the inanimate, the human from the inhuman, form from shadow and makes us realize that real life pulses from out of that pit. It makes us realize that flesh-and-blood individuals, with hopes and fears, laughter and tears, live in those rat holes. Not unlike you and me, except for the rat holes.

Ditsi Carolino made the documentary, and she has done us a supreme favor by doing so. Like most of us, she was one of those who often passed by the crowded community living by the railroad tracks, on her way to Manila from her home in Quezon City. Unlike most of us, she saw the community. She wondered what life there must be like, and decided to take a closer look. She spent three months getting to know the dwellers and soaking in the atmosphere, such as the world there might be called that, and another five months to film. All in all, she got 35 hours footage. All that has been pared down to an hour and a half of film, and the result is a seamless web of marvelous storytelling.

"Riles'" power comes from its two characters, Eddie, a *balut* vendor, and Pen, his wife, and their brood of six children. Three of them, Pen would say, are kids of her brother, whose wife died some years ago, and she couldn't very well turn them away, could she? That is what gives the documentary the feel of *cinema verité*, a movie with characters and dialogue. Except that these are no actors playing roles, they are the people caught in the vise of almost unbelievable deprivation. "Riles" tells the story of Eddie and Pen, whose lives mirror that of the community. There is no narration, Eddie and Pen pretty much carry the story by themselves.

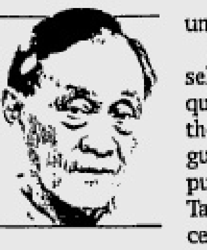
Exceptionally outstandingly. Eddie in particular is a fantastic find, he is an absolute natural. Both he and Pen are well developed as characters, quite apart from being real persons, which is what gives a face to the community, one starkly etched and finely detailed. Eddie drinks gin, works his ass off in the dead of night, complains about his wife's nagging, philosophizes about life and love, faces life's challenges with desperate cheerfulness ("If I don't laugh, I'll go mad"). Pen tries to keep brood together amid the most horrendous adversity (their hovel is torn down eventually), and amid her husband's foibles. Truly, not unlike you and me, except that we don't lose our shacks to men who come one day with sledgehammers.

The movie has many powerful moments, but what moved me most is the one where Eddie tries to comfort his daughter who is sobbing her heart out on the cot. She asked him earlier to bring her home a piece of hamburger, but he comes back dry. He is rubbing her back and saying, "Don't cry, your father is just a *balut* vendor." None of this reeks of melodrama, it is just one brief scene, the movie does not dwell on it. But it comes out powerfully anyway, more than the part about the candidates descending on the community, more than even the *siga* twisting away and singing Freddy Mercury's "I Want to Break Free" with a karaoke.

All throughout, the train rumbles by like a refrain, a decrepit mass of metal, like the *riles* dwellers themselves, plodding along, in a constant state of exile, stopping nowhere, going nowhere. This is home along the *riles*, sans Dolphy, which is how a great many urban denizens live. It's the new metaphor for *kapit sa patalim* (clinging to a knife's edge), and I don't know that it doesn't improve even on it.

The beginning of wisdom is seeing. First, see "Riles"—I really hope it gets more sponsors for that. Then, see what lies beyond it.

Dangerous speculations



ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

THE NATION has been put on edge by speculation over the outcome in the Supreme Court of the petition seeking the disqualification of Fernando Poe Jr. from the presidential race on the grounds that he allegedly is not a natural-born Filipino citizen. The speculation has been fanned by unfounded reports that the majority of the justices have decided to disqualify Poe.

There is absolutely no reason to be nervous over the reports because, first, Ismael Khan, deputy administrator of the Court, has assured that the tribunal has not yet made up its mind, and secondly, no decision is forthcoming until after Thursday, when the Court hears oral arguments (by an appointed group of "friends of the court" lawyers) on the petition. Reports of a "done" decision came from opposition sources, who tried to preempt the decision they imagined would be handed down. Unfortunately, the media facilitated the dissemination of the reports. In our time (my generation of reporters, who covered the judicial system), we had so much respect for the courts that media adhered to the norm that a judicial decision is not an official decision until it has been formally promulgated by the Court.

We accepted the principle, that premature disclosure of a judicial decision, especially that of the Supreme Court, was in contempt of court undermining its independence and public confidence in its decision and putting it under undue public opinion pressure. Today, there is less respect for this norm. In our time, it was not considered a "scoop" (a test of journalistic enterprise) to preempt the Court's decision before promulgation. Preemption was not a clean "scoop," and it served no useful purpose to jump the gun on the Court. On the contrary, premature disclosure fuels political irresponsibility by giving agitators and rabble-rousers the opportunity to stir up political unrest and fan public opinion against the courts. We did not care very much about scoops on judicial decisions. The reality was that the courts were fair enough to release their decisions simultaneously to court reporters. The most important consideration was that the decisions were released with a reasonable time ahead of newspaper deadlines, allowing reporters to read the decisions carefully, understand them and enable them to explain the decisions lucidly and clearly.

That was the time when, elegant journalistic prose was produced from court stories, which were a pleasure to read but which were not merely a reproduction of lawyers' briefs and which explained in layman's terms the abstruse language of the law. Thus, the outstanding reporters and editors in our generation who spurred judicial reporting. Standing out, for example, was Felix Gonzalez, the legendary news editor of the old Manila Daily Bulletin. He was called "judge" by journalists and lawyers because he was a damned good court reporter, an assignment that fostered responsibility and respect for facts more than other "beats" did—not excluding the political beats.

There are stricter inhibitions on journalists against premature leakage of judicial decisions. Politicians are less inhibited. In the case of the disqualification petition on Poe, politicians identified with the opposition camp not only disseminated falsehood but also used the spurious reports to foment unrest and stir up a lynch mob atmosphere against the Supreme Court. On the basis of unfounded speculation there sprang up incendiary public statements from opposition allies of Poe and the actor himself, warning of "massive" public unrest if the Supreme Court disqualified him.

With smoke coming out of his ears, Poe himself, in a political rally, warned of dire consequences if he were disqualified. Adding fuel to the fire, lawyer Estelito Mendoza, instead of arguing Poe's case in Court, warned of widespread public unrest, followed by former Sen. Francisco Tatad who ranted that the opposition "cannot accept" a decision disqualifying Poe. They spoke along the same theme made by former President Joseph Estrada who had said that the disqualification could plunge the country "into civil war." When Estrada was disrobed of legitimacy by the Court, did the masses rose up in "civil war" to restore him?

The Court's deputy administrator, Khan, said that the warnings traced the pattern of previous attempts to undermine the Court and incite public opinion against it following a series of decisions that upheld the legitimacy of the accession of President Macapagal-Arroyo and that held that Estrada had no immunity from being prosecuted criminally on plunder charges. Khan made clear the Court cannot be intimidated by this form of political blackmail. Mendoza, Estrada and Tatad are overstating their case when they warned of public unrest over an adverse Court decision.

If it were a case of a test between the Court and Poe, it is hard to see why multitudes will rush to the streets in a "civil war" on behalf of Poe or storm the Court. In recent history, I know of only two events in which the Filipino people were provoked to die on behalf of a cause—the execution of Dr. Jose Rizal and the assassination of Benigno Aquino Jr. What has Poe done for this country to galvanize a civil war over his disqualification? Who wants to die for Poe? I would like to see the day when Mendoza, Tatad and their cohorts will be manning the barricades and marching in the streets to lay their lives on the line for someone whose constitutional qualification for the presidency on citizenship is very much under a cloud and is under judicial test.

'Thy will be done!'

HIGH BLOOD

Raymunda P. Ortega

WE'D also like to know the concerns of the sixtysomething and above, what makes their blood pressure rise or makes them sit back, content that all's well with their world and with themselves. —**Ed.**

MILLIONS of times a day, these four little words are prayed by millions of lips in supplication to the Heavenly Father. Every time the "Our Father" is prayed, these words are uttered in various tongues, moods, intonations, intensity and devotion. Total, trustful and unquestioning surrender to the Father's will is expressed. There should not be room for doubts, anxiety and fear if we truly feel what we say. There should only be strong faith and confidence in Him; that whatever happens and however things turn out to be, it is God's will and it is for our own good. That should be the right attitude whenever we pray: "Thy will be done!"

Often as I mull over the past, I wonder how many times have I prayed with true devotion, meaning, without distraction, in my 72 years of life. I have been praying since as far back as I can remember, but as to the quality of my prayers, I wish I could say with certainty that I did and still do pray sincerely from the bottom of my heart every time, at all times.

When our Lord uttered "Thy will be done" in His agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, that was one instance those words were sincerely prayed. We in our feeble endeavor to follow Christ's teaching and examples, burdened as we are by human weaknesses, find it difficult to say the same prayer from deep within the innermost recesses of our hearts. In most instances, while praying "Thy will be done," our hope is that God might just see eye to eye with us, do things our way and grant us what we ask for in conformity with our plans.

I once heard a funny story. It is not a true story. It only illustrates what we often feel when we pray. A student, praying for passing marks in his exams, lifts his eyes heavenwards and utters "Thy will be done," while at the same time feeling "Please don't give me no for an answer. I do deserve to pass. I can't see, Lord, how you would deem it otherwise." Then comes examination time and the results are given out a week later. The same student gets a failing mark and, with bitterness in his heart, he goes back to the church. A few minutes before he comes in, the altar boy takes the big crucifix hanging on the altar to have it cleaned, replacing it with a smaller one for the meantime. In an angry voice, the student cries out: "Hey you, tell your Father to come out! How dare He make me fail, after all the offerings and sacrifices I have offered on this altar!"

Same with a patient terminally ill with cancer. He would humbly say he submits himself to the will of God, but deep inside he would ask "Why me, Lord? There are others out there who are worse sinners than I am, yet they are allowed to go on their merry way unburdened by this suffering that I have."

We say "Thy will be done, Lord" in times of trouble and adversity, but unspoken within us is the feeling that we do not deserve such shabby treatment from God. After a time, with our prayers seeming to be unanswered still, rebellion against our miserable situation seethes within us like an angry volcano threatening to erupt. We continue to pray only in the hope that God will soon see things our way and lifts us out of our misery.

Then comes a turnaround of fortune. Suddenly, we find ourselves on top of the world and every good thing seems to come our way. Haven't we experienced instances when we meet nothing but success and happiness at every corner we turn? When we feel we have the Midas touch, turning things into gold with the least effort expended? In that state of glory, do we think of saying "Thy will be done"? Most likely not. For it is in our nature to think of success as something we achieve by ourselves alone. We believe in our talents, capabilities and physical attributes. God's part in our triumphs is often disregarded and, more often than not, we believe it is luck and good fortune (*suwerte*) or feng shui, maybe, that gave us our success and happiness. "I'm the best and the most beautiful among the contestants. Naturally, I won the title." That it was God's plan that one won rarely crosses the winner's mind.

"Thy will be done!" means asking God to take over our lives entirely. We make decisions, yes, but we ask for discernment of His will before doing so. How do we do this? By closing our eyes for some moments and letting the Holy Spirit come and overwhelm our hearts, our minds, our whole being. We listen to Him in our cores, and He will make us feel and know what He has deemed right for us. All we have to do is act according to His will!

Raymunda P. Ortega is a retired court stenographer of the Regional Trial Court of Quezon City.

Consular reports

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

SOME of my students, too timid to pop the question, have been trying to calculate my age from the little bits of personal information I give out during class. Some ask aloud why I always seem to be encouraging them to do the archival research on areas and topics that I would have undertaken if I were 20 years younger. Too much proximity to the past has made me rethink my own mortality. Going through old files and notebooks recently I found whole wish lists of books and documents gathered from bibliographies and catalogues of Philippine material. Most of these, unfortunately, are abroad in libraries and archives in the United States or Europe and just the current peso-dollar exchange rate dashes all my hopes of even reading a fraction of these. At P56 to one US dollar, plans of overseas research seem more distant than they used to be. If Lucio Tan's predictions are right and we hit P100 to one dollar some time this year, that spells the end to satisfying my bibliographic wish lists.

For example, consular reports from the Philippines during the time of the revolution and Filipino-American War (1896-1899) were basic to my research. It was through consular reports that one got a sense of the times. Consuls, aside from aiding nationals, sent regular reports to their home governments describing the upheaval in the Philippines. In British consular reports we read about the beginning of the revolution in August 1896; from the French consular reports we read about Emilio Aguinaldo's movements and somehow get a sympathetic view. From the reports of the US and Spanish consuls stationed in Hong Kong we read about the continuing resistance to Spanish rule by the Filipinos in exile. Naturally, the social and political conditions in the Philippines—or at least Manila—drew my attention from economic reports which, in retrospect, should be studied hand in hand with political reports if only to understand why the Philippines was much coveted by other countries like Belgium or Germany before the Americans occupied the Philippines.

In the 1903 Bibliography of the Philippine Islands that covered materials available in the US Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. is a three-page list of US Consular Reports on economic aspects—or should we say opportunities—available for American investors in the new-found colony. The reports not just from Manila but also from other US consular posts around the world cover the period from 1882 to 1902 and tackle various topics. The titles I listed down for research are the following:

"Free Tobacco Culture in the Philippine Islands" was sent by the US consul in Madrid in 1881. Then there were two reports from Manila, the first in March 1889 followed by another in December of the same year, correcting errors made in the previous report. I was surprised to find the name of US Consul Wildman in Hong Kong who was known to Emilio Aguinaldo and the other revolutionaries who were briefly exiled there following the pact of Biak-na-Bato. Wildman made two reports on tobacco: a general one in 1898 followed by another on cultivation of tobacco in the Philippines (1899). Long before tobacco was seen to be hazardous to the health, this leaf was a major economic factor in the Philippines.

History textbooks tell us that the other boom products of the late 19th century were coffee, sugar and abaca. These products made people and regions rich overnight but to borrow from the title of Norman Owen's landmark study of Bicol, what we had then was a short period of "prosperity without progress." The regions planted to sugar, coffee, abaca and tobacco did not develop very much, such that when the boom times were over many people were as poor as when they started. At any rate, US consuls were keen on agriculture in the country so we have reports on: fruit culture in the Philippines (1884); agriculture in the Philippines (1889) by Alex Webb, US consul in Manila; followed by another report the same year on agricultural products of the Philippines. The sugar industry of the Philippines (1889) was tackled as well as poultry (1893).

There are reports on a wide variety of topics: two reports on musical instruments and their importation into the Philippines in 1900. Exports of cheese and candles to the Philippines and West Indies sent in by the US consul in Rotterdam (1899); beer in the Philippine islands (1890); Mexican dollars in the Philippine Islands (1894); extension of markets for American flour (1894); Oriental market for dairy products and fruits (1894); pearl fisheries and pearl supply (1896); American fire engines in Manila (1898); Swiss goods in the Philippines (1898); imports of shoes into the Philippines (1898); imports of furniture into the Philippines (1899); even a report on an earthquake-proof church (1889) which could probably be the all-steel fire-proof wonder we know as San Sebastian in Manila.

Most of the US consular staff that Filipinos meet these days mostly are anonymous faces behind a glass counter that issue or deny visas. The wish list of consular reports proves that consuls of any country do much more than handle visa applications. Sometimes they even record Philippine history for us during times when our patriots were too busy fighting wars and revolutions to write.

* * *

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu

Heartbroken women

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

THIS isn't a Valentine hang-over column. I thought I'd pick up on a warning issued last year by the World Health Organization (WHO) about how heart disease is now the leading cause of death among women worldwide.

I pulled out the latest Philippine Health Statistics yearbook from the health department and confirmed that heart disease is indeed the leading cause of death among Filipinas, claiming some 40,000 lives each year, compared to 14,000 for cancers.

WHO points out that women have greater fears of cancers, particularly breast cancer, and may forget to take preventive measures against heart diseases, summarized in one sentence: "Eat smart, kick smoking and move for health."

It's advice we hear all the time, applicable to both women and men. Let's see how the preventive measures apply to the Philippines:

First, eat smart. For many women, eating smart is associated with dieting. But there's more to eating smart than weight control. In relation to heart disease, there's the matter of watching out for cholesterol. Here, it's amazing how all kinds of urban myths have sprouted around cholesterol: people will, for example, avoid the lechon and yet binge on shrimps, not knowing that the latter can also be quite problematic.

Still another aspect of diet that people overlook is sodium content. Just last week the Institute of Medicine in Washington and Health Canada (the equivalent of our health department) issued a report noting that on average, Americans and Canadians consume about 4000 milligrams of sodium a day, equivalent to about two heaping teaspoons of salt. Health authorities used to recommend a maximum of 2,500 mg a day, but have reduced the limit to 1,500 mg a day. For older people, they're recommending even lower limits: 1,300 mg for people over the age of 50 and 1,200 mg for those over 70.

I suspect the average Filipino takes as much, if not more, sodium than north Americans. We need a lot more public health education pointing out the dangers of salt, or, to be more precise, of sodium. Using the word "salt" tends to lead people to think only of table salt or *asin* when the villain is actually sodium, hidden in many kinds of food, especially processed ones. A package of chicken noodle soup, for example, contains up to 900 mg of sodium, more than half of the daily recommended maximum. Instant noodles, now a staple in Filipino households, is also very high in sodium because of vetsin, whose chemical name is monosodium glutamate.

It's not just processed foods that are problematic. Restaurants often mask their bad cooking by using lots of salt, soy sauce, vetsin. Watch out too for other food flavorings that we normally don't think of as sources of sodium: last year the Thai Ministry of Health issued a warning to the public that spicy foods are also high in sodium.

If you have a relative who suddenly has an attack of high blood pressure, you might want to check what he or she was eating that day. This happened once with an elderly relative of mine, who was very conscious about fatty foods but was unaware of the sodium factor. As we reviewed what she had eaten that day, we finally identified the culprit: she had binged on olives.

If those olives can send blood pressure soaring, cutting down on dietary sodium can also be very effective for controlling blood pressure. People should really look into how dietary changes can reduce the need for some of the medicines used for high blood pressure, medicines whose prices are themselves quite heart-breaking.

Let's move on now to the "kick smoking" part of WHO's advice. I don't have exact figures but I suspect that we're following a pattern found throughout the world, one where more women are taking up cigarettes.

Smoking is a women's issue. Many women are aware of the link between smoking and lung cancer, but not of smoking and cervical cancer. Then there's the link of heart disease. The risks increase in women who smoke and use hormonal contraception, pills or the injectable.

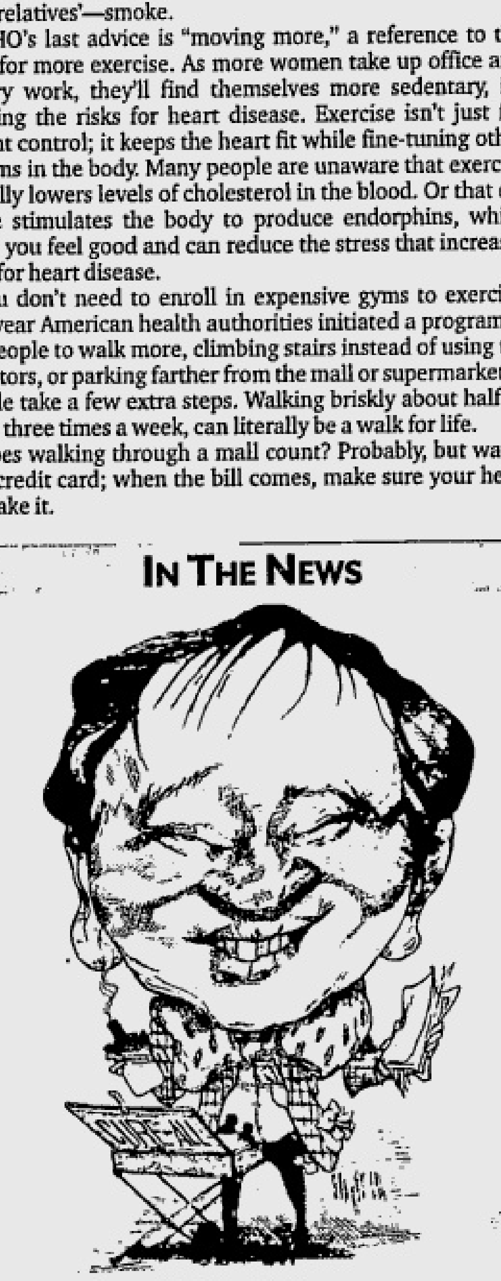
WHO warns women to avoid second-hand smoke, a reference to the fact that many women may not smoke but live in households where they are exposed to other people's—often male relatives'—smoke.

WHO's last advice is "moving more," a reference to the need for more exercise. As more women take up office and factory work, they'll find themselves more sedentary, increasing the risks for heart disease. Exercise isn't just for weight control; it keeps the heart fit while fine-tuning other systems in the body. Many people are unaware that exercise actually lowers levels of cholesterol in the blood. Or that exercise stimulates the body to produce endorphins, which make you feel good and can reduce the stress that increases risks for heart disease.

You don't need to enroll in expensive gyms to exercise. Last year American health authorities initiated a program to get people to walk more, climbing stairs instead of using the elevators, or parking farther from the mall or supermarket so people take a few extra steps. Walking briskly about half an hour, three times a week, can literally be a walk for life.

Does walking through a mall count? Probably, but watch that credit card; when the bill comes, make sure your heart can take it.

IN THE NEWS



Bro. Eddie Villanueva

LETTERS
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

We need fair trade, not aid

THE CLUB of rich countries that wrote the free trade rules has been aggressive in removing barriers when it comes to industrial products in which they have a comparative advantage. But they refuse to do the same when it comes to agriculture. Japan became prosperous because the outside world buys its exports. Yet, it maintains a 500 percent tariff on imported rice.

The United States and France give a subsidy of US$11 per head of cattle. The United States protects its sugar market for US farmers by not allowing imports except under a quota system. The developed world funnels nearly US$1.0 billion a day in subsidies to its own farmers enabling them to dump rice, corn, wheat and other products driving down commodity prices in poor countries resulting in more poverty. Even the World Bank estimates that if the rich nations would only stop their farm subsidies and tariffs, the poor nations will benefit by as much as a half-trillion dollars and lift 150 million people out of poverty by 2015.

Washington's betrayal of its own free trade principles culminated in the last Cancun conference when Brazil, China, and India opposed proceeding on anything else until the farm subsidies issue has been addressed.

In our country, we embraced free trade. Perverse results followed. It resulted in the closure of most of our factories and the bankruptcies of the agriculture sector. Why did we commit suicide in order to beg from Washington? All we need is fair trade. Not aid.

—EDUARDO F. HERNANDEZ,
executive director,
Center for Farming Landowners,
2/F First Life Center, 174 Salcedo St.,
Legaspi Village, Makati City

Old faces in Senate slate

ISN'T it surprising that while the public clamor is supposedly for change and good governance for servant leaders, for new faces and fresh perspective in politics, the January 2004 Social Weather Stations survey in the senatorial race showed old faces, discredited politicians and assorted show-biz and sports personalities dominating the top 12 slots? What a big disappointment.

Most of the preferred candidates in the senatorial survey are the same people who were responsible for the mess our country finds itself in. Staging a political comeback by riding on the coattails of a know-nothing actor masquerading as a presidential candidate, there is no doubt that these Marcos and Erap era political zombies will inflict more damage to our already fragile national situation.

—FERDIE T. SIBAL,
18 Green Leaves St.,
Capitol Green Village,
Tandang Sora, Quezon City

Dropouts?

THE PERCEPTION that Fernando Poe Jr. is incapable of effectively exercising power, responsibility and executive functions, in view of his being a high school dropout is quite illogical.

Henry Ford, founder and owner of the giant Ford Motor Company, only reached sixth grade. He was once publicly maligned when journalists called him ignorant. As a result of the incident, Ford filed a libel suit against two professionals. He argued in court that a man who knows where to get what he wants to know could not be ignorant. His arguments were supported by a long line of push buttons in his office; by merely pressing the buttons, he promptly got anything he desired to know. He won the case.

Abraham Lincoln, one of the greatest American presidents, had one year of formal schooling. This did not bar him from excelling professionally and to become one of the world's greatest leaders.

John Dewey, an American philosopher, in his article on education declared, "Real education comes after we leave school; and there is no reason why it should stop before our death." It is a continuing process, he added.

In ancient times, there were great religious leaders who never had the privilege of a university education. This did not prevent them from rising to eminence. Akhenaten, Buddha, Moses to mention a few.

I had the opportunity to know from sources I can no longer recall that reading, listening and asking are springs of knowledge. Perhaps, large portions of Lincoln's vast knowledge and wisdom came from these sources. We may not know it, maybe Fernando Poe Jr. is doing what Lincoln did. I am encouraged to believe that what those critical intellectuals and professionals can do and accomplish, FPJ can do likewise and possibly exceed. He has comparatively more formal education than Ford and Lincoln.

—VICENTE BRIZUELA,
(2nd lieutenant, ret.),
San Gabriel, Mintal, Davao City

No to sellout of power co-ops to corporations

IN THE ARTICLE "Power co-ops seen to seek IPP offers," (PDI, 12/23/03), it was alleged that "the managers of more than 100 rural electric cooperatives (RECs) are guilty of duplicity for deliberately resisting the power utilities' conversion into stock cooperatives to appease potential buyers."

That is not true. The Association of Philippine Electric Cooperatives (Apec) strongly advocates consumer ownership. We strongly support democratic ownership of electric cooperatives. We want that the six million member-consumer households of cooperatives are made the true owners of the 120 electric cooperatives. Privatization should be for the masses, not just for a few.

We do not favor investment management contracts (IMCs) or the sellout of the cooperatives to oligarchs or multinationals. Apec categorically states that it is not working in conspiracy with IMCs or oligarchs that wish to take over the electric cooperatives. Neither is it Apec's intention that the cooperatives' general managers get a "windfall" from the sale of the cooperatives to corporations.

With cooperative debts now condoned through the advocacy of Apec, many opportunists, the same for-profit groups that did not want to invest in depressed rural areas—which the cooperatives eventually energized—now find electric cooperatives attractive targets for takeover. Apec is keen on having the National Electrification Administration, Cooperative Development Authority and Securities and Exchange Commission immediately agree on the rules for conversion, so as to ensure that the six million member-consumer households will have the power of self-determination for their electric cooperatives and decide where to register their cooperatives.

In the same article, Martin Manodon, CDA spokesperson for the Cordillera, was quoted thus: "the CDA study on successful mergers and consolidations of cooperatives was released to the INQUIRER following a disappointing meeting with Apec."

We would like to clarify that Apec never held any formal meeting with the CDA to discuss the matter. The claim of Manodon carries no grain of truth.

On the matter of the successful mergers of cooperatives, there is evidence of problems cropping up following the merger of an inefficient cooperative with a good performing cooperative. Further, any merger must be a voluntary decision of the cooperatives involved.

—ERNESTO C. PABLO, EDGAR L. VALDEZ,
SUNNY R.A. MADAMBA,
party-list representatives,
Association of Philippine
Electric Cooperatives,
Room 604, North Wing Bldg.,
House of Representatives,
Constitution Hills, Quezon City

THE ARTICLE simply reported the claims of an official consolidation report of the Cooperatives Development Authority. Martin Manodon also supplied the INQUIRER with his own report that supposedly synthesized the resolutions in a Mindanao conference where both CDA and Apec representatives met to discuss the issue of converting rural electric cooperatives into stock cooperatives.

I was unable to contact the Apec offices in Northern Luzon, using numbers supplied by its officers when the omnibus power reform measure was a highly controversial issue. But I did relay the CDA matter to the Benguet Electric Cooperative. Beneco, however, could not speak for the organization.

—VINCENT CABREZA,
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

No way honorable

"I EXPECT that from a man who is honorable," former Movie and Television Review and Classification Board chair Armida Siguion-Reyna was quoted (PDI, 2/5/04), when Fernando Poe Jr. admitted he has a son by another woman.

I am not sure by what moral standards Siguion-Reyna goes by. Since when is cheating on one's wife an honorable thing to do? No husband will admit to having committed adultery unless he is presented with the undeniable product of his adulterous relationship. And no self-respecting wife will take marital betrayal so lightly that the dishonor brought to her by a philandering husband as played down as Siguion-Reyna seems to suggest.

So please do not add any more indignities to the betrayed wife by attributing honor to the unfaithful husband's deed.

—CESAR M. DE LOS REYES,
122-B Taurus St.,
Cinco Hermanos Subd., Marikina City

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PHILIPPINE ACADEMY OF REHABILITATION MEDICINE
4TH PARM ANNUAL CONVENTION
Legaspi, Albay ◆ February 18-21, 2004

PM&R Pearls at 30 and beyond . . .

VISION: The Philippine Academy of Rehabilitation Medicine envisions a unified and highly competent group of physiatrists committed to the rehabilitative needs of the Filipinó people and the professional needs of its members and aspires to gain national and international honor and recognition.

MISSION: The Philippine Academy of Rehabilitation Medicine is a medical specialty which serves as an instrument for the advancement and recognition of the practice of Rehabilitation Medicine as a medical specialty. It aims to unify and professionalize the practice of the specialty, adhering to the moral and academic standards set forth by the Philippine Medical Association. The Academy aims to achieve excellence in physiatric practice through continuing medical education and training; compassionate and accessible community service; networking with other medical specialties and promoting relevant scientific researches, in an environment of camaraderie and cordiality among its members.

HISTORY OF PHILIPPINE ACADEMY OF REHABILITATION MEDICINE

A small group of military surgeons interested in the fields of Rehabilitation Medicine were sent to the United States Military Hospitals immediately after the Second World War for training in the care of military injuries and disabilities and formed the nucleus of the specialty in the Philippines during its infancy. Further impetus in the growth of the field was provided by Dr. Henry Kessler who, under the sponsorship of the U.S. Armed Forces, visited the National Orthopedic Hospital and conducted several in-service training for the local physicians.

During the mid 50's, young Filipino doctors who became interested in Rehabilitation Medicine as a specialty left for the United States for further training. Most did their residency training programs at the Rusk Institute in New York. However, only a few returned home to practice.

In 1960, a group of physiatrists and orthopedic surgeons interested in the field organized the Philippine Society of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation with Dr. Abelardo 0. Inocentes as its first president. The society then had an active membership of less than twenty. In 1974, the organization's name was changed to the Philippine Academy of Rehabilitation Medicine with Dr. Tyrone M. Reyes as its first president. With the establishment of four training programs, the academy boasts of more than 200 members - mostly home grown specialists in the field of Rehabilitation Medicine.

At present, the Academy has continued to work towards the betterment of the specialty and continually moves on in providing a better quality of life at large for the Filipino people.

Office of the President of the Philippines

Malacañang, Palace
Manila

I convey my warmest felicitations to the officers and members of the **Philippine Academy of Rehabilitation Medicine** on the occasion of its 4th Annual Convention.

I laud this organization for its efforts to uphold the noble values of the medical profession. I hope that this gathering will be able to address the concerns of your academy, ensure the welfare of our country's medical practitioners, and foster camaraderie among yourselves.

This year's gathering speaks of your commitment to elevate your chosen vocation to one of international standards. This objective can be attained by working together and by drawing out the best that your members can offer. I hope that this occasion inspire your members to share and support our vision of a vigorous and healthy nation.

Mabuhay kayong lahat!

Gloria Arroyo
GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO
President
Republic of the Philippines

Department of Health
Manila

I would like to extend my warmest greetings to the officers and members of the **Philippine Academy of Rehabilitation Medicine (PARM)** on the holding of their 14th Annual Convention on **February 18-21, 2004.**

On this occasion, I would like to congratulate PARM for reaching 14 years of providing your members and other health professionals fresh knowledge and insights on the current state of the art in rehabilitative care.

With the growing trend towards greater industrialization, modernization and globalization that the country is faced today, challenges in rehabilitation medicine have been magnified by leaps and bounds. The importance of your role in the care of many Filipinos in various workplaces has never been more pronounced than in the present.

Indeed, the role that you play is vital in attaining our common goal of ensuring the health and welfare of Filipinos from all walks of life. There is a need for the whole sector to collaborate meaningfully in order to ensure the availability of and access to essential healthcare services across geographic, sociocultural, economic and political boundaries.

As our ever-dependent partner in providing greater access to quality, affordable healthcare to many of our Filipino children, the PARM enjoys the full support of the Department of Health in this undertaking.

Together, let us work to build a strong republic by keeping our children, the future of our nation, healthy and strong through healthy lifestyles.

Congratulations and Mabuhay ang PARM!

MANUEL M. DAYRIT, M.D. MSc.
Secretary of Health

Philippine Medical Association

With sincerest felicitation, we greet on behalf of the Officers and Board of Governors, the officers and members of the Philippine Academy of Rehabilitation Medicine, in the observance of its **14th Annual Convention.**

We congratulate you, the administration and the members of the PARM as you once again show your sense of dedication in the advancement of physiatry through the staging of this convention. This annual confab on rehabilitation medicine is always something to look forward to by physiatrists of the country, and understandably with added significance as you celebrate the PARM's Pearl Anniversary. You really do us proud for going the distance in providing the membership first rate scientific sessions with a host of speakers from foreign shores complementing those from our own. All these considerations are more than enough to make this event another landmark.

Congratulations! Mabuhay ang Philippine Academy of Rehabilitation Medicine!

JOSE T. SANCHEZ, M.D.
President

Pearl Awardee

Ma. Luisa L. Aportadera, MD	Tyrone M. Reyes, MD
Rafaelita S. Javier, MD	Juan F. Alcazaren, MD
Ricardo N. Lim, MD	Ofelia L. Reyes, MD
Vicente L. Gan, MD	Antonio O. Perquet, MD
Bee Giok K. Tan-Sales, MD	Nayda F. Unson, MD
Mary Jeanne O. Flordelis, MD	Alfonso Chan, MD
Ruby L. Casaul, MD	Jose Y. Soriano, MD
Rodolfo L. Reyes, MD	Arturo Malgapo, MD
Betty Dy Mancao, MD	Primitivo T. Cammayo, MD
Vania L. Yu, MD	Robert D. Lim, MD
Arnel V. Malaya, MD	Romeo O. Abiog, MD

International Society of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine

It is a pleasure to address the participants of the 14th Annual Convention of the Philippine Academy of Rehabilitation Medicine. The Philippine rehabilitation has a long tradition of participation in the clinical and academic rehabilitation work, including organization of international congresses and having president of the IRMA organization, Tyrone Reyes.

The International Society of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine (ISPRM) strives to bring together as many national organizations and individual members as possible in the field of rehabilitation medicine, and indeed more and more of these are joining the ranks. The Philippine Association is a good standing member and such is contributing to the ISPRM strength. Hope more individual members will join us.

I am sure the 14th annual convention under the guidance of Dr. Malaya and collaborators will be held at the highest possible level and everybody will benefit from the exchange of knowledge. Further interaction can be experienced by participating in our next world congress to be held in Sao Paolo (Brazil) in 2005. After the very successful congress we had in Prague last year, no doubt many colleagues will come.

I wish Dr. Malaya, the convention's organizing and scientific committee and all of you a very successful congress!

(SGD) HAIM RING MD, MSC PM&R
ISPRM, President

Philippine Academy of Rehabilitation Medicine

Dear Colleagues!

In behalf of the Executive Board of the Academy and the organizing committee, may I welcome you with pride to the 14th Annual Convention of the Philippine Academy of Rehabilitation Medicine amidst the backdrop of the majestic Mayon Volcano in the province of Albay.

On the occasion of our 30th (PEARL) Anniversary, the organizing committee selected topics that are not the usual fare in our past scientific meetings, but they are common problems that physiatrists will increasingly see in the future, Thus the theme:"PM & R Pearls Beyond 30....".

The program schedule was made, so that you will have an equally enough time to renew your friendship with your colleagues and savor the beauty and the palatal adventures offered by the Bicolano cuisine. We have lined-up activities for you and your accompanying persons that will make your stay in Bicol a memorable experience.

May I extend my heartfelt thanks to all the guest speakers, delegates, our friends in the pharmaceutical industry and to the organizing committee for making this event possible and truly enriching.

Mabuhay ang Philippine Academy of Rehabilitation Medicine!

ARNEL V. MALAYA, MD., DPBRM, FPARM
President
Philippine Academy of Rehabilitation Medicine

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Four decades and four years ago some of us planted a tree. We nurtured it with faithful intentions, and enriched it with dedication to learning its ways.

It has grown from its strong roots into a luxuriant tree with many strong branches. It has grown so big that it now extends over the whole country.

This is the Tree of Rehabilitation Medicine. You and I are that tree. Today, we are gathered to celebrate the Pearl Anniversary of our Specialty.

Let us not rest for a moment but continue to learn and contribute to the advances in the aspects of our specialty. This is the best way we can focus on our main objective in Rehabilitation medicine—to serve and help the disabled.

Service must be our primary drive—excellent, faithful, honest and dedicated service.

Congratulations to all!

JUAN ALCAZEN, JR. M.D., DPBRM., FPARM
Honorary Chairman

Maogmang aldao!

The organizing committee of this year's 14th Annual Convention welcomes you to 3 days celeb-relaxing activities!

With its theme "PM & R Pearls at 30 and beyond....", rarely tackled but most commonly encountered out-patient rehabilitation topics will be discussed by our local and foreign speakers. Likewise, to prove that we practice what we preach, the program of activities has been holistically designed for cognitive stimulation, physical enhancement and socio-cultural upliftment.

Truly, all of these we owe to the solid support of our PARM officers and staff, undying commitment of our sponsors, and most especially to you, our delegates, without whom this endeavor would not have been made possible.

Mabalos!

JOSEPHINE R. BUNDOC, M.D., DPBRM, FPARM
Overall Chairperson

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SPEAKERS: **Noel Carilo, MD (Philippines), Romeo Encanto, MD, (Philippines), Apichana Kovindha, MD (Thailand), Simeon Marasigan, MD, (Philippines), Sanirose Orbeta (Philippines), Robert Pangan, MD (Philippines), Gianna Rodriguez, MD (Philippines), Pinky Recto (Philippines), Reynaldo Rey-Matias, MD (Philippines), Cynthia San Luis, MD (Philippines), Robin Sekerak, MD (USA), Antonio Tanchuling, MD (Philippines), M. van der Esch (Amsterdam)**

TIME	February 18 (Wednesday)	February 19 (Thursday)	February 20 (Friday)
7:30		Breakfast Symposium *sponsored by HI-EISAI* "Updates on Alzheimers Disease and Vascular Dementia"	Breakfast Symposium *sponsored by RTP & Sons* "Electrodiagnostics and Combination of Ultrasound and Electrotherapy"
8:00			
8:30			
9:00		PM & R in Pregnancy Exercise and related Limb Syndromes	PM & R in Concerns in Practice of Profession
9:45		Booth and Exhibits Visits	PM & R in Hospice Care "Palliative Care During the Last 48 Hours"
10:00	REGISTRATION	PM & R in Pain: Evaluation and Rehabilitation of Long-term TMJ Syndromes *sponsored by PFIZER*	
10:30			Booth and Exhibits Visits
10:45		F4: "Fat Female but Fearlessly Fit" Exercise for Weight Reduction: Are they really effective? Wellness is Good Nutrition	PM & R in the Elderly SCI
11:00	Lunch Symposium *sponsored by UCB Pharma* "Post-Stroke Alphasia"		
11:15			
11:30			Lunch Symposium *sponsored by PFIZER* "The Management of Arthritis in the Filipino Patient"
12:00	Research Contest *sponsored by RTP & Sons*	Lunch Symposium "Badminton-Related Injuries: Prevention & Management	
1:00		Guided Tour and Shopping	PM & R in Geriatric Wellness *sponsored by MSD* Exercises for the Elderly: What are the Limits? The Method of Pilates: An Effective Compliment to Rehabilitation
2:30			Booth and Exhibits Visits
3:00	Business Meeting		Depart for Viento de Mar Sportfest *sponsored by HI-EISAI*
5:00			
6:00	Opening Ceremonies		Dinner Symposium *sponsored by AVENTIS*
7:00	Dinner Symposium *sponsored by BIOMEDIS* "Treatment Option in Management of Musculoskeletal Pain"		Closing Ceremonial and Fellowship Night
8:00	Fellowship Night	Alumni Night	

February 21 (Saturday)	Breakfast and Departure to Manila

Water Crisis?... What's the Real Score?...

Who is doing what?

"The MWSS, together with the DENR, NWRB, Maynilad, Manila Water, NIA and NPC, have stepped up our efforts to address the current water shortage and prevent a water crisis. We have also fast-tracked the pre-construction activities for new water sources projects"

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo inaugurates one of the **Patubig ni GMA** projects (Barangay Sitio Arienda, Taytay, Rizal). Patubig ni GMA has already provided water services to 403, 650 households of the more than 600,000 households target in Metro Manila, Rizal and Cavite for 2004.

MWSS Administrator Orlando C. Hondrade, in an interview, answers these questions and more...

What is the real water supply situation in Metro Manila?

There is no water crisis. There is a water shortage, which, at present is very manageable. What we, together with DENR, NWRB, NIA, NPC, Maynilad and Manila Water, have initiated since the last quarter of 2003 are measures aimed at preventing a water crisis from happening. Habang maaga pa ay pinagtutulungan na namin na hindi maranasan ang nangyari noong 1998 El Niño time.

Where does the water for Metro Manila's domestic use come from and what is the situation at the source of water?

Ninety seven percent of water for Metro Manila's domestic use comes from Angat Dam in Bulacan which is conveyed through aqueducts to the La Mesa and Balara filtration plants for treatment. The rest comes from deep wells and other sources.

The water level of Angat Dam is lower than the operating rule curve or what we normally expects at this time of the year. Angat's water level, as of February 16, 2004 is 193.83 meters. Under normal situation it should be a high of 204.79 meters and a low of 199.87 meters.

What are the Reasons for such Low Water Level?

The rainfall during the last quarter of 2003 was very scarce and accordingly, the inflow of water to Angat was much less than normal. For instance, inflow to Angat in October was only 30 percent of the normal. In November, it was 89 percent and in December, only 50 percent of the normal. Starting this January until May, we expect lesser frequency of rain as we have entered the dry season.

What are the measures that you do to prevent the occurrence of a water crisis or to lessen the adverse impact of water shortage?

Water use reduction

The National Water Resources Board has reduced the release of water from Angat for domestic water use of Metro Manila and for irrigation by 5 percent in November 2003. This February, the 5 percent reduction for domestic water use remains while for irrigation, the reduction is 20 percent and in April, by 50 percent and so on until the rains come. Per Water Code, domestic water use is given priority in allocation when there is impending water shortage.

In order not to adversely affect the palay crops of in Bulacan and Pampanga that get water from Angat, the NIA has come up with massive information campaign on water irrigation rotation and efficient water management practice in irrigation systems.

Water conservation

We have been advising everyone, through the media, to conserve water. There are many ways of conserving water, which we have been disseminating in the newspapers, radio and television.

Immediate repair of leaks and strict enforcement of laws of illegal tapping

Maynilad and Manila Water have been more vigilant in looking for, and immediately repairing, water leaks in their distribution lines. We are asking the public to immediately report these leaks. We are also requesting the public to report illegal water tapping as this wastes so much water.

Maximize use of deep wells and other sources

We are also maximizing the use of deep wells. There is also a proposal to use sea water after undergoing a desalination process.

Patubig ni Pangulong GMA

In accordance with the desire of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to provide clean water to the urban poor and waterless areas, the MWSS, together with PAGCOR, MMDA, Maynilad and Manila Water have intensified the Patubig ni Pangulong GMA Program through the deployment of static and mobile water tankers, the installation of public faucets, construction of deep wells and interconnection in these areas.

Cloud Seeding

We are undertaking cloud seeding operations to increase the flow of water into Angat Dam. The MWSS, through Maynilad and Manila Water, the Department of Agriculture and the National Power Corporation have agreed to pull our resources together to conduct cloud seeding operations in areas covering Angat and Ipo dams. We will do this in 30 to 45 days.

What are your long-term measures to address this almost perennial water problem?

In order to ensure adequacy of water for the use of Metro Manila and to lessen our dependence on Angat, MWSS has been developing alternative water sources like the following: Wawa Dam Project which is expected to generate 50 ML); the 400 MLD Bulk Water supply Project (400 MLD); the Laiban Dam Project (1,900 MLD); and the Agos Dam Project (3,000 MLD). Aside from these, we are entertaining other proposals that can immediately address Metro Manila's short and long-term water shortage.

Since I took over the reign of MWSS Administrator, I have been doing everything possible to speed up the process of getting these projects off the ground.

WATER SAVING TIPS

Recycle and re-use water

Make every drop count!

IN THE BATHROOM

Turn off the water while shaving, brushing your teeth, etc. Use a glass to gargle.

Use only short bursts of water from the tap to rinse your toothbrush or razor

Take shorter showers or use a pail and a tabo instead of the shower.

Turn off the water when soaping and shampooing.

Don't use the toilet as a wastebasket.

Fix leaky faucets and toilets.

LAUNDRY

When washing by washing machine.

Wash only full loads of laundry.

Don't use more water or soap than what is actually needed.

Avoid double washing by pre-soaking clothes. Use the pre-soak setting on the washer or start the wash cycle to partially fill the tub, turn the washer off and allow clothes to soak, then turn the wash cycle on without draining the tub.

When washing by hand

Soak heavily soiled clothes first to remove dirt easily.

Don't let the basin overflow under a running tap.

IN THE KITCHEN

When cleaning vegetables soak them first in a basin of water rather than rinsing them under a running faucet.

Soak pots, pans, and dishes immediately after they are used to reduce the water needed to clean them.

Soak greasy plates first in hot water. Wash slightly greased utensils first before the greasier ones.

Do not thaw frozen food under a running tap.

IN THE GARDEN

Water your plants, garden during the cool part of the day.

Capture and store rainwater for watering the garden.

IN THE GARAGE

When washing your car, use a pail, not a water hose, and a cotton rag instead of a sponge.

Sweep the driveway instead of washing with a hose

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2004
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
A19

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23 Aurora St., Old Albay District
Legazpi City
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Fax No. (052) 820-1274
E-mail: inq_bicol@inquirer.com.ph

E-mail: pr_provincial_news@inquirer.com.ph
Across the NATION
Assistant Editor Tony Bergonia

VISAYAS BUREAU
c/o Cebu Daily News
18-15 Escario St., Cebu City
Tel. Nos. (032) 233-0346/233-0349
Fax No. (032) 232-9938
E-mail: pdivis@skyinet.net

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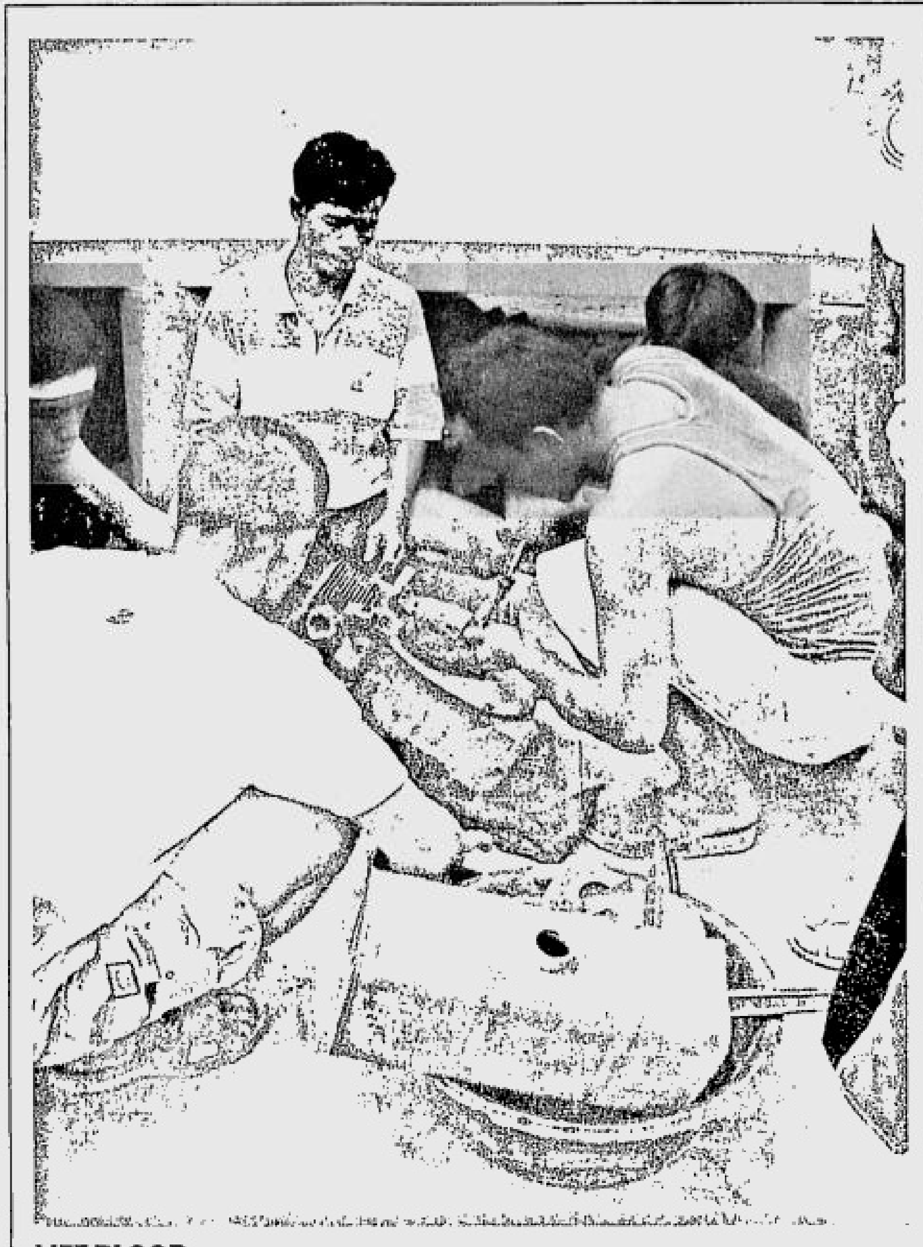
Lacson supporter dies in car crash



LIFE BLOOD

Toots Soberano/PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

The memory of the tragedy that befell their relatives who died when their boats were swept by waves off the shores of La Union is still fresh but life goes on for these fishermen who try to bring a boat engine back to life in their village of Mindoro.

By Carla P. Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD—A pastor was killed while three persons were injured yesterday when the vehicle of the advance party of presidential candidate Panfilo Lacson fell into a ravine in San Carlos City, about 144.7 km north of this city.

Supt. Ricardo de la Paz, San Carlos City police chief, identified the fatality as Ruben Encabo Pestano, 39, of City Heights, Bacolod City, and a pastor of the Dios na Amahan religious sect.

He said Pestano's body was found at the bottom of the ravine with a huge stone on the head. Witnesses said he jumped out of the vehicle as it was falling. He was hit by falling stones as he lay at the ravine's bottom.

Injured were Pamela Arroyo of Bacolod City and members of Lacson's staff identified as Rolly Bandarlipe, 35, and Arturo Castro, 36, of Quezon City.

The three injured passengers of the vehicle were rushed to the San Carlos Doctors Hospital.

De la Paz said Arroyo was in serious condition as part of her skull suffered serious injury and had been scraped.

Arroyo, he added, should be airlifted to Bacolod where hospitals have better medical facilities and equipment.

Bandarlipe, Lacson's political coordinator for Luzon, and Castro were both out of danger. Bandarlipe's right eye was swollen. Castro suffered injuries in the head and different parts of the body.

The four were on board a dark green Strada Mitsubishi pick-up on its way to San Carlos City from Bacolod to put up campaign posters and to prepare for the scheduled arrival of Lacson.

The presidential candidate was expected to arrive in San Carlos at 10 a.m. today from Guimaras to kick off his campaign sorties in the province.

But the pick-up fell into a deep ravine at Sitio Ducogducog, Barangay Rizal, San Carlos, at about 12:45 p.m.

According to De la Paz, some witnesses said the vehicle was traveling fast over rough roads when it reached a curve and fell into the ravine.

He said it was possible that the driver was not familiar with the winding road and slammed on his breaks when he saw the curve, causing the vehicle to fall.

Luckily, the vehicle hit a portion of the road that was protruding about 200 meters away from where the pickup slid, preventing the vehicle from plunging into the 500-feet deep ravine.

Rescuers, however, saw campaign posters of Lacson scattered at the bottom of the ravine while they were trying to rescue the pickup's driver and its three passengers.

A staff member of Lacson called the INQUIRER in Bacolod to ask help in getting rescue units to the area and to give the cellular phone number of Castro to check on how they were doing.

When the INQUIRER dialed the number, a man answered the phone and shouted: "Help us, help us. We fell into a ravine. Call for rescue, a helicopter is needed."

Jose Ma. Valencia, chief of staff of Gov. Joseph Maranon, and De la Paz immediately sent rescue units to the area when contacted by the INQUIRER.

Lacson is a candidate of a faction of the Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino and is running on a platform of good government and peace and order.

C. Luzon foresters under attack from loggers

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—More than 50 men, armed with guns and bolos and believed to be working for illegal loggers in the boundaries of Nueva Ecija and Bulacan, fired at 37 government foresters on Feb. 10, a report from the regional Department of Environment and Natural Resources said.

The attack was the latest hostility in the renewed campaign to protect the forests of Central Luzon amid a looming water shortage, the report said.

"We were chased with gunfire," Rafael Otic, Nueva Ecija environment officer, said in a report to the regional DENR here on Tuesday.

Otic said he and the other DENR personnel escaped unhurt after they retreated to the entrance of the Siliwin Creek at Barangay Rio Chico in General Tinio, Nueva Ecija.

The area is within the Minalungao National Park, a protected zone in the Sierra Madre mountain range in eastern Central Luzon.

According to Otic, the team was on the third day of follow-up operations.

On Feb. 9, they seized and burned 1,821 board feet of lumber in the village. While surveying Sapang Tuntunin the next morning, they found another 818 board feet of lumber.

The armed men attacked when the DENR team reached Siliwin Creek at 3 p.m., Otic said.

He said on Feb. 11, armed men on board two trucks removed the roadblocks that the DENR put up in Siliwin. While in Barangay Bignay, the DENR team was warned of a waiting assault in the nearby village of Sumandig.

Otic said his team avoided that route and arrived safely in Palayan City at noon of Feb. 12.

"The illegal loggers of General Tinio have become bold and bonded themselves with more than 50 persons with guns, communication (equipment) and transportation. They will resist all DENR personnel who will confiscate the illegal forest products," he said in the report.

The wood species red lauan and yakal are usually obtained and sold at P30 for every board foot.

The DENR has prepared criminal charges against one Regalado Pangilinan who reportedly led the Feb. 10 attack.

Regidor de Leon, DENR regional executive director, said Environment Undersecretary Renato de Rueda had ordered him to "use all available resources and implement creative operational strategies" to end the "pestering report" of continuous illegal logging in General Tinio and Doña Remedios Trinidad, Bulacan.

De Leon said they would ask military officials to send more soldiers to DENR teams involved in forest protection work. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

2 rebs killed as NPAs attack Army detachment

By Carla P. Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—Two communist rebels were killed while a soldier, a civilian and a paramilitary man were wounded when about 50 members of the New People's Army (NPA) tried to overrun a military detachment in Himamaylan City, Negros Occidental.

A member of the Civilian Armed Forces Geographical Unit (Cafgu) was also missing when a band of rebels attacked the detachment of the Army's 61st Infantry Battalion in Barangay Mahalang, Himamaylan, about 82.9 km south of here.

Insp. Jose Labuyo, Himamaylan police deputy chief, identified one of the slain rebels as Juaning Magbanua, alleged commander of the NPA Larangan Gerilya 2.

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Iloilo jeepney drivers demand ₱1 hike in fare

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

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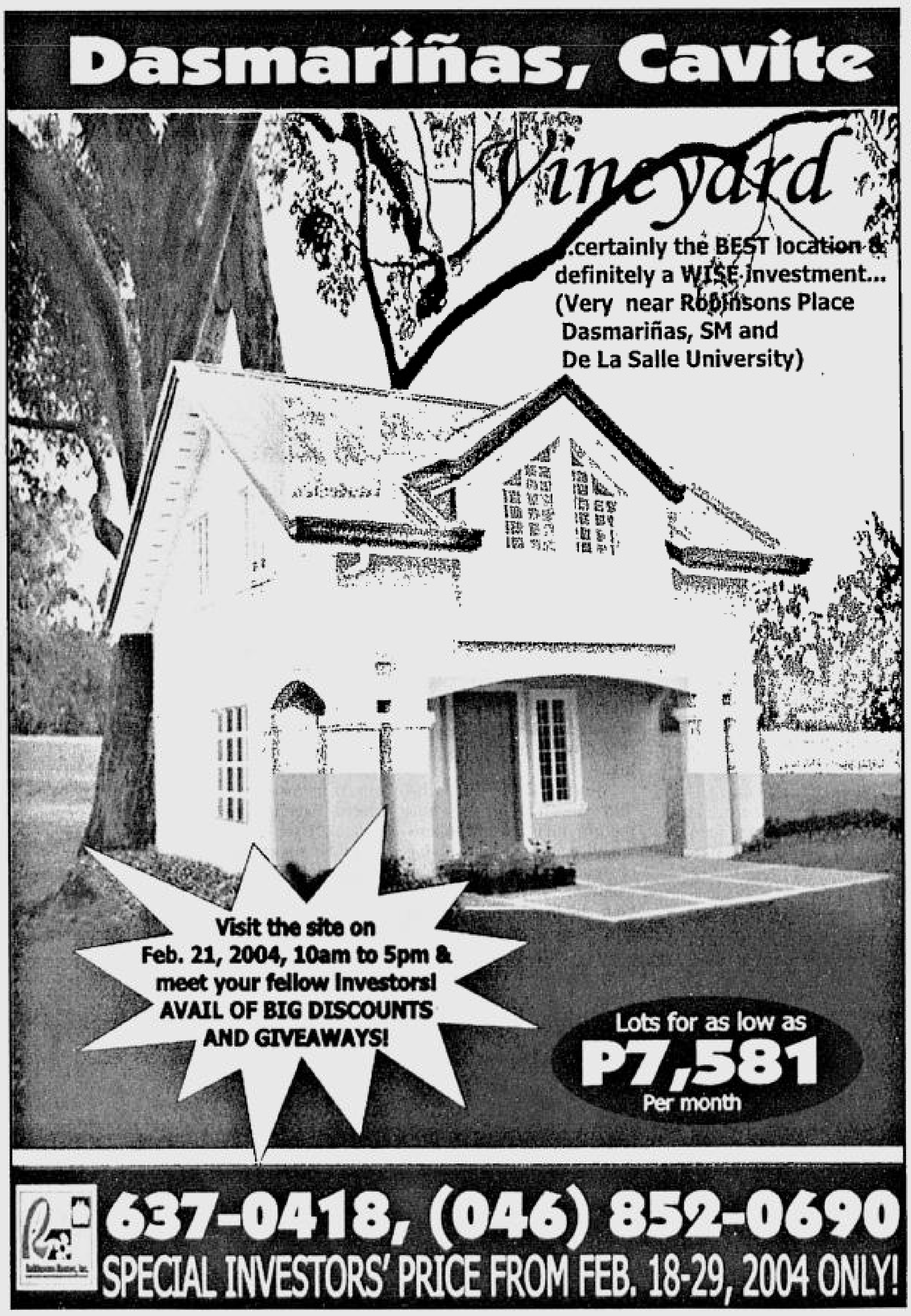

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Across the NATION

E-mail: pr_provincial_news@inquirer.com.ph

Assistant Editor **Tony Bergonia**

VISAYAS BUREAU
c/o Cebu Daily News
18-15 Escario St., Cebu City
Tel. Nos. (032) 233-0346/233-0349
Fax No. (032) 232-9938
E-mail: pdivis@skyinet.net

MINDANAO BUREAU
FEP Printing Corp. Bldg
Ma-a Road, Davao City
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Lacson supporter dies in car crash

By Carla P. Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD—A pastor was killed while three persons were injured yesterday when the vehicle of the advance party of presidential candidate Panfilo Lacson fell into a ravine in San Carlos City, about 144.7 km north of this city.

Supt. Ricardo de la Paz, San Carlos City police chief, identified the fatality as Ruben Encabo Pestano, 39, of City Heights, Bacolod City, and a pastor of the Dios na Amahan religious sect.

He said Pestano's body was found at the bottom of the ravine with a huge stone on the head. Witnesses said he jumped out of the vehicle as it was falling. He was hit by falling stones as he lay at the ravine's bottom.

Injured were Pamela Arroyo of Bacolod City and members of Lacson's staff identified as Rolly Bandarlipe, 35, and Arturo Castro, 36, of Quezon City.

The three injured passengers of the vehicle were rushed to the San Carlos Doctors Hospital.

De la Paz said Arroyo was in serious condition as part of her skull suffered serious injury and had been scraped.

Arroyo, he added, should be airlifted to Bacolod where hospitals have better medical facilities and equipment.

Bandarlipe, Lacson's political coordinator for Luzon, and Castro were both out of danger. Bandarlipe's right eye was swollen. Castro suffered injuries in the head and different parts of the body.

The four were on board a dark green Strada Mitsubishi pick-up on its way to San Carlos City from Bacolod to put up campaign posters and to prepare for the scheduled arrival of Lacson.

The presidential candidate was expected to arrive in San Carlos at 10 a.m. today from Guimaras to kick off his campaign sorties in the province.

But the pick-up fell into a deep ravine at Sitio Ducogducog, Barangay Rizal, San Carlos, at about 12:45 p.m.

According to De la Paz, some witnesses said the vehicle was traveling fast over rough roads when it reached a curve and fell into the ravine.

He said it was possible that the driver was not familiar with the winding road and slammed on his breaks when he saw the curve, causing the vehicle to fall.

Luckily, the vehicle hit a portion of the road that was protruding about 200 meters away from where the pickup slid, preventing the vehicle from plunging into the 500-feet deep ravine.

Rescuers, however, saw campaign posters of Lacson scattered at the bottom of the ravine while they were trying to rescue the pickup's driver and its three passengers.

A staff member of Lacson called the INQUIRER in Bacolod to ask help in getting rescue units to the area and to give the cellular phone number of Castro to check on how they were doing.

When the INQUIRER dialed the number, a man answered the phone and shouted: "Help us, help us. We fell into a ravine. Call for rescue, a helicopter is needed."

Jose Ma. Valencia, chief of staff of Gov. Joseph Maranon, and De la Paz immediately sent rescue units to the area when contacted by the INQUIRER.

Lacson is a candidate of a faction of the Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino and is running on a platform of good government and peace and order.

TALLIS SOBERANO/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

LIFE BLOOD
The memory of the tragedy that befell their relatives who died when their boats were swept by waves off the shores of La Union is still fresh but life goes on for these fishermen who try to bring a boat engine back to life in their village of Mindoro.

C. Luzon foresters under attack from loggers

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—More than 50 men, armed with guns and bolos and believed to be working for illegal loggers in the boundaries of Nueva Ecija and Bulacan, fired at 37 government foresters on Feb. 10, a report from the regional Department of Environment and Natural Resources said.

The attack was the latest hostility in the renewed campaign to protect the forests of Central Luzon amid a looming water shortage, the report said.

"We were chased with gunfire," Rafael Otic, Nueva Ecija environment officer, said in a report to the regional DENR here on Tuesday.

Otic said he and the other DENR personnel escaped unhurt after they retreated to the entrance of the Siliwin Creek at Barangay Rio Chico in General Tinio, Nueva Ecija.

The area is within the Minalungao National Park, a protected zone in the Sierra Madre mountain range in eastern Central Luzon.

According to Otic, the team was on the third day of follow-up operations.

On Feb. 9, they seized and burned 1,821 board feet of lumber in the village. While surveying Sapang Tuntunin the next morning, they found another 818 board feet of lumber.

The armed men attacked when the DENR team reached Siliwin Creek at 3 p.m., Otic said.

He said on Feb. 11, armed men on board two trucks removed the roadblocks that the DENR put up in Siliwin. While in Barangay Bignay, the DENR team was warned of a waiting assault in the nearby village of Sumandig.

Otic said his team avoided that route and arrived safely in Palayan City at noon of Feb. 12.

"The illegal loggers of General Tinio have become bold and bonded themselves with more than 50 persons with guns, communication (equipment) and transportation. They will resist all DENR personnel who will confiscate the illegal forest products," he said in the report.

The wood species red lauan and yakal are usually obtained and sold at P30 for every board foot.

The DENR has prepared criminal charges against one Regalado Pangilinan who reportedly led the Feb. 10 attack.

Regidor de Leon, DENR regional executive director, said Environment Undersecretary Renato de Rueda had ordered him to "use all available resources and implement creative operational strategies" to end the "pestering report" of continuous illegal logging in General Tinio and Doña Remedios Trinidad, Bulacan.

De Leon said they would ask military officials to send more soldiers to DENR teams involved in forest protection work. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

2 rebs killed as NPAs attack Army detachment

By Carla P. Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—Two communist rebels were killed while a soldier, a civilian and a paramilitary man were wounded when about 50 members of the New People's Army (NPA) tried to overrun a military detachment in Himamaylan City, Negros Occidental.

A member of the Civilian Armed Forces Geographical Unit (Cafgu) was also missing when a band of rebels attacked the detachment of the Army's 61st Infantry Battalion in Barangay Mahalang, Himamaylan, about 82.9 km south of here.

Insp. Jose Labuyo, Himamaylan police deputy chief, identified one of the slain rebels as Juaning Magbanua, alleged commander of the NPA Larangan Gerilya 2.

Magbanua was identified by a tricycle driver who was a resident of Mahalang.

But Lt. Col. Rey Guerrero, 61st IB commander, said they have yet to verify the driver's claim.

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The rebels later withdrew in separate directions, leaving behind their two slain comrades, the report said.

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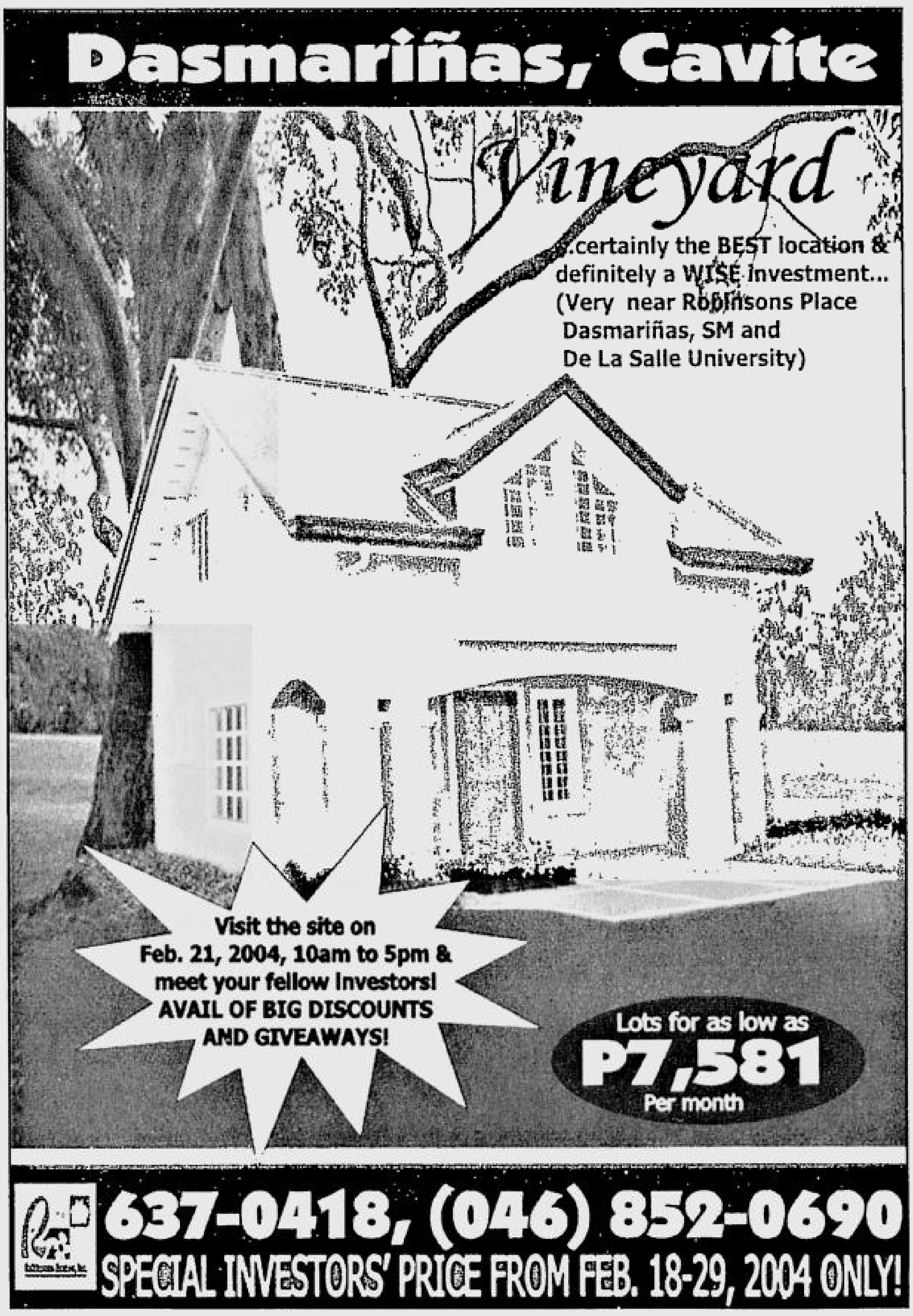

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INQUIRER Northern Luzon

Editor Jun Bandayrel
Bureau Chief Rolando B. Fernandez

Laoag City folk take pride in their longest 'tupig'

By Cristina Arzadon
Laoag City

IN THIS season of longest or biggest, from the longest longaniza to the giant banga (earthen pot), comes the longest tupig (native cake) ever made in Laoag City.

Laoagueños went back to the streets on Feb. 6, parading this time the longest *tupig*, also known as native suman, spanning 1.5 kilometers. It stretched from the city hall to the city market and 10 blocks down to the provincial museum just beside the provincial capitol.

DAYTOY TI AMIANAN

The city's record of longest parade was the two-kilometer longaniza.

Motorists and spectators stood still while traffic got tangled for more than an hour as more than 1,000 elderly women in their traditional garb, dragged the *tupig* chain around the city plaza.

The parade ended at the museum grounds to a waiting crowd of residents who were invited to a *padaya* (food gathering) of mostly native dishes.

The *tupig* parade was part of the Pamulinawen Festival marking the city's month-long fiesta in honor of its patron, Saint William the Hermit.

"This is the season to go back to our tradition. We are breathing life to our *tupig*, a modest creation of our Ilocano forebears, so that this tradition may live hereon and forever," Asuncion Fariñas, city tourism council chair, said.

A LAOAG City resident helps in preparing the city's longest *tupig* .
DANNY SABIO/CONTRIBUTOR

More than 80 women comprising the city social welfare office's day care workers spent a day preparing the *tupig*.

The women used 175 gantas of *malagkit* (glutinous rice), 210 kilos of sugar, 140 packs of dairy cream, 450 pieces of coconut, 140 cans of condensed milk, 140 boxes of cheese and 140 bundles of firewood to produce the *tupig*.

The native suman was tied together with a fishing net for the parade.

Some women arrived as early as 6 a.m. to help uncoil three mounds of *tupig* or about 7,500 pieces.

Latecomers queued frantically at the DSWD office, where the *tupig* were unloaded, when they noticed that the tip of the *tupig* chain had nearly reached the public market.

"Please, don't pull too hard on the chain, it might break. There are 2,500 pieces left uncoiled," a woman shouted when the women started shoving as they fell in line while grabbing the *tupig* chain.

"*Ay nagdakkelen* (This is big)," said an elderly woman, eliciting laughter from male spectators.

Oral history could not determine where *tupig* production originated.

"This delicacy used to be cooked only during Christmas and served during the noche buena. Instead of money, *tupig* is given away to young carolers," Aurora Corpuz, city social welfare officer, said.

The *tupig* can last for two weeks even without refrigeration. Its shelf life is extended up to a month when kept frozen.

As time went by, the *tupig* became an essential part of special gatherings especially among *balikbayan* who have long missed out on the Ilocano staple food.

To this day, elderly women keep producing the *tupig* that they sell at P5 apiece at the public market.

Couple who didn't finish school sends kids to college

By Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes
Binalonan, Pangasinan

EVER read "Daddy Long-Legs," the story about a mysterious man who sent orphans to college? In the eastern town of Binalonan in Pangasinan, "Daddy Long-Legs" comes to life through a Chinese-Filipino businessman and his wife who have sent more the 80 poor students to college, paying for their school expenses and providing them with daily allowances.

The couple has failed to complete formal education but has made it a mission to send as many poor students to school as it could support.

Local businessman Danilo Uy, 57, only reached second year high school, while his wife, Vice Mayor Myrna Belle Uy, 51, finished second year in college.

The Uys have 18 college scholars and have "adopted" the village's integrated public school, paying for all the school fees of its more than 600 students and looking for sponsors to donate school buildings.

'Milestone'

A milestone in the Uys' life was in March 2003 when the first batch of students of the Balisa Elementary School graduated.

Danilo Uy considers the school as his "baby." He donated the land on where the school sits, asked his Chinese-Filipino friends George Cham and So Khim, and Gov. Victor Agbayani to donate buildings, and paid the salaries of volunteer teachers.

To ensure that the children went to school, Uy gave them daily fare money.

DANILO and Myrna Belle Uy with students of the Bugayong Integrated School in Binalonan, a school that they assist.
YOLANDA SOTELO-FUERTES/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

"The village's school was 5 km away, so the children had a hard time going to school everyday. I decided to donate an idle land to the government where an elementary school could be established," he said.

The Uys expect nothing in return from their scholars but there's one thing they want them to do: "To pay forward" whatever kindness they received while they were studying.

"We tell them that when they can afford it, they must sponsor their own scholars—whether they are their siblings or relatives or their friends' children. Imagine how many poor children could go to college if our scholars have their own scholars, who in turn will have their own scholars?" Uy said.

Scholars

The scholarship program was not planned at all, said Uy. He said it started in the 1980s when their four children were still in the elementary grades.

"I was very disappointed with their barely passing marks. I told them that I and their mother did not finish school, so I wanted them to study hard," Uy said.

At that moment in the couple's life came Lina Madriaga, a poor girl from their neighborhood, and asked them if they could help her go to college.

"I told her I will finance her studies but she has to tutor my children every afternoon," Uy said.

The girl, it turned out, was studious and got good grades, and inspired the Uy children to study hard, too. "My eldest son, Dennis, who got poor marks in the elementary, graduated valedictorian in high school," Uy said.

After their neighbors in Bugayong village learned about Madriaga's case, they went to the Uys' house and pleaded with the couple that they be sent to school, too.

Four students from Binalonan were chosen as scholars and the Uys sent them to government nursing schools in Urdaneta City.

The Uys have also sent three students to medical schools.

One of them, Paul Subido, a biology graduate, was applying as a laboratory worker at the municipal government at the time when Myrna Uy was a councilor.

"I told him that the local government offers a small salary and that he should consider going to medical school. But he said his father is a farmer and could not afford the expenses. I said, 'If you pass the NMAT (National Medical Admission Test), I will make you my scholar.' I was surprised when he passed the test," Myrna said.

She said Francisco Duque III, president of the Philippine Health Insurance Corp. (PhilHealth) and whose family owns the Lyceum Northwestern (now Lyceum University), gave her a 50-percent discount in her scholars' tuition in Lyceum's medical school.

Another medical scholar was Mylene Guillermo, a daughter of a jeepney driver and a schoolteacher. The principal of the school, where Guillermo graduated valedictorian, recommended her to the Uys.

Guillermo won second honors when she graduated from the Lyceum University's medical school.

Aside from doctors and nurses, the Uy couple has "produced" engineers, teachers and professionals in other fields.

They said they could not remember all the names of their scholars or where they are now, "although many of them are working abroad."

What makes the Uys happy is when their scholars receive academic distinctions and awards during graduation, like Laarni Baces who graduated magna cum laude in engineering from the Computronix College in Dagupan City.

Surrogate parents

The scholarship services do not stop after graduation, as the Uys also pay for their wards' review and placement fees, and even wedding expenses.

When Armando Mercado, now a veterinarian, married recently, the Uys spent for the wedding even if the bride's parents wanted to spend for the wedding.

The couple opened a veterinary drug distribution business, which Mercado manages.

What do the Uys receive in return?

"They love us back. Every time they are in town, they see us first before they go home to their respective families. They never forget to send us letters or to call us up," Myrna said.

The couple said they feel blessed that their four children—Dennis, Daniel, Darwin and Donald—understand what they are doing and never complain about the money being spent on their scholars.

"Maybe they have the right to complain because it is them who are now managing the (family's) businesses. But they support us in our endeavor," the couple said.

The Uys said they are not rich and the money they spent for their scholars "was not excess money."

The Uys have expanded their scholarship program to other towns of the province.

Like "Daddy Long-Legs," who asked his scholars to write him monthly to apprise him of their activities, the Uys' scholars go to their house every first Monday of the month to get their tuition money and allowance and to update the couple of their school activities.

Like surrogate parents, the Uys encourage the students to consult them about their school and personal problems.

Victims of sunken 'hell ship' remembered

By Allan Macatuno
Subic Bay Freeport

"MY FATHER was born on the 4th of July in 1902. He died a long way from home. He was strong and brave and good and kind and funny. Oh, how I love him! I miss him everyday and will until my dying day... I think he would be proud of the kind of man you are becoming, and proud to share his name with you."

American Tucker Bruun wrote these in a letter she gave to her 16-year-old grandson David Christian in memory of her father, Othello Christian Bruun, who died on a Japanese "hell ship" during World War II.

The ship was the Oryoku Maru, a new cabin type vessel that appeared to be designed for luxury travel in the Orient. Bruun's father was among the prisoners of war (POWs) who were loaded into the Oryoku Maru on Dec. 13, 1944.

The ship sank in Subic Bay after it was bombed by American warplanes.

Last Jan. 15, relatives of the Oryoku Maru victims and Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority officials led the groundbreaking for a memorial marker to recognize the importance of the historical heritage in this former American military base.

The memorial, to be built near the former ship repair facility in Subic, pays tribute to the POWs of World War II, especially the casualties of the "hell ship."

The victims' descendants boarded a yacht and offered a wreath and prayer at the site where the Oryoku Maru sank.

Historians noted that the ship's capacity, at about 15,000 tons, was the best Japanese vessel that the Americans had seen that time. The ship did not bear any markings but was armed with anti-aircraft guns.

In her letter dated November 1994, Bruun told her grandson that after the fall of Bataan and Corregidor, her father escaped and avoided the infamous Bataan Death March.

Unfortunately, he was captured in Cebu in 1942.

By the end of 1944, the Japanese began moving prisoners to Japan to be used as slave labor.

Bruun's father was among the 1,619 men who were loaded into Oryoku Maru and scheduled to be shipped to Japan.

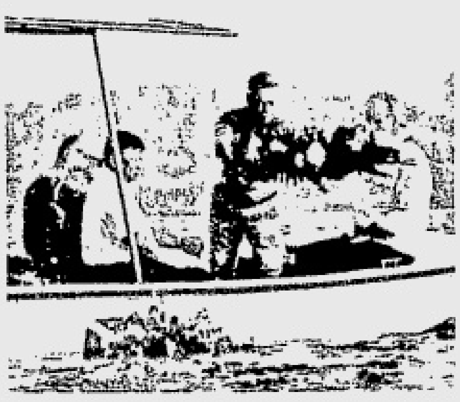
"Being unmarked, the ship was bombed and strafed by American planes from the aircraft carrier Hornet on (Dec. 14 and 15). The Marine colonel, who was with Daddy when he died, said Daddy was brave. He tried to survive and come back to us, but there was no air in the hold and no ventilation. He suffocated," Bruun wrote.

Unknown to the pilots of the US Navy planes, the ship's cargo was cramped with POWs. The ship then took a number of direct hits and eventually sank.

Some of the prisoners were forced to swim ashore and were herded to a nearby tennis court. But around 300 bodies of POWs, including Bruun's father, went down with the ship that sank approximately 300 meters off the present site of what Alava Pier.

Bruun's letter is posted on www.oryokumaruonline.org, the website she and her daughter designed to help the relatives of POWs who died on the "hell ship" find information about the Oryoku Maru.

"I want to convey the feeling that although it may have happened a long time ago those who never returned did not die in vain and will never be forgotten as long as we keep the memory of their heroism and sacrifice alive. They are worth remembering," wrote Bruun, who was born in Olongapo City during her father's first tour of duty in the Philippines.



A DESCENDANT of the victims of the sunken Oryoku Maru offer a wreath at Subic Bay where the Hell Ship sank 60 years ago.
ALLAN MACATUNO/PDI CENTRAL LUZON DESK

GMA has ₱5B, FPJ ₱2B for campaign, says Roco

From page A1

The standard-bearer of the Alyansa ng Pag-asa said he could run a 90-day campaign on a budget of P105-P200 million tops to reach voters from Aparri to Jolo. *"Sagad na yon,"* he said as he led his ticket on a two-day swing through Davao province.

Citing his father, who was a farmer, Roco said: "It takes one to sow seeds, but you need many to harvest. Now I can see the harvest will be good."

Roco warned that Ms Macapagal could be ousted or impeached if she wins using the reenacted budget as her war chest.

He conceded that the President could realign funds, but added: "The budget is not supposed to be spent for elections. It is illegal. [If she uses the budget] then she should be impeached. And if she wins, she should be thrown out. Anybody who uses public funds to win should be thrown out and should be barred from taking the oath."

Roco aired a call to voters: "Anybody who spends P5 billion, my dear people of the Philippines, reject them. The responsibility to the people for misusing public funds remains forever. And we hope the Filipino people will not forget. We hope it will stay in their memory."

In Kalibo, Aklan, Sen. Panfilo Lacson called on the Commission on Elections to look into the alleged use of government funds and resources for Ms Macapagal's campaign.

He said he had received word that employees of the Department of Public Works and Highways in the town had been assigned to put up posters and banners of the President along the major streets and in community centers.

"I think the Comelec should start looking into this," he said. "No candidate should be allowed to make use of public funds and services to further his or her campaign.

According to Lacson, Ms Macapagal's incumbency was giving her an undue advantage over the other presidential candidates.

"She is the only one who's not having difficulty with campaign resources," he said.

Where did it come from?

According to Roco, the law allows a candidate to spend P3 per voter, and a party P10 per voter.

"Multiply that by 35 [million voters], then P105 million is the legal limit [for a candidate] and P450 million for the party and myself," he said. "That's the law, so how in heaven's name do you spend [that much]? It's next to impossible, unless you give it away."

The former senator and education secretary said it was "very difficult" to visualize how the administration could raise billions of pesos.

"Where did they get the money?" he said.

He also said that in spending such a huge sum, "they are trying to buy the sovereignty of the people" using funds raised illegally or taken from the nation's coffers.

200 friends

Roco noted that to raise P200 million, which, he said, was enough to cover political ads and logistics such as transportation, food, accommodations, posters and streamers, he must have at least 200 friends who could each give him P1 million.

"I probably have 400 friends who can give me half a million, probably 800 friends who can give me P250,000 each," he said. "I can afford to raise P12 million all by myself."

His friends would be ashamed to ask for something in return, Roco said. "But if [they] give P250 million [each], even if they don't say there are strings attached, you would be foolish to believe that there is none," he added.

Roco said last week that not one of the taipans had contributed to his campaign kitty, "so each citizen must seek to contribute" to his crusade to replace the incumbent administration.

He said yesterday that the Alyansa slate would not spend all that much because he would be ashamed to do so while many of his countrymen were living in abject poverty.

"I have never earned P200 million in one year," he said. We have no such plans of spending P200 million [because] I don't know how much money we can raise."

Yesterday alone, the Alyansa spent P400,000 for plane fare, food costs and hotel accommodations.

To make do with a tight budget, money must be spent prudently and logistics optimized, Roco said.

He said that with 1,500 towns, the Alyansa had put up only four streamers in every town, or 6,000.

"You can spread a lot," he said. "Going to and from the rally you can put up posters. But you must remove them within three days after the rally."

Dole-outs

From his detention quarters at Camp Capinpin in Tanay, Rizal, ousted President Joseph Estrada accused Malacañang of having given dole-outs to barangay leaders to get them to attend the campaign rallies of the administration's K4 coalition.

Estrada said he had received reports that during the kick-off in Laguna of the K4's national campaign, Ms Macapagal's people gave P10,000 to each barangay official and P20,000 to each of their treasurers.

"That is the reason why she is confident to face the people," Estrada said in a phone interview, speaking in Filipino.

He also said only huge resources could prop up Ms Macapagal's popularity rating.

Asked how he came to know of the dole-outs, Estrada replied: "That's my province."

The Estradas continue to maintain a home in Laguna.

But Michael Defensor, the President's campaign spokesperson, denied this.

"That's not true," he said. "The figures are unbelievable. Why would you give more to the treasurer than to the barangay captain when the former is just an appointee of the latter?"

Only prayer

Asked to comment on talk that he was among the biggest financiers of Poe's Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino, Estrada said: *"Ang tulong ko ay dasal na lang* (My only help is through prayer)."

The scuttlebutt is that the jailed ex-President has been forced to dip into his resources to help keep the Poe campaign running.

Poe is supposedly scrounging around for resources with the alleged reluctance of expected donors to provide money to the KNP until after the Supreme Court rules on the question of his citizenship.

But Estrada said Poe was not about to throw in the towel: "He's one not to allow himself to be defeated. He's fighting back."

Drug money

Citing raw intelligence reports, Interior Secretary Jose Lina said drug lords had placed their bets on certain national and local candidates in an effort to ensure their survival against the government's intensified campaign against illegal drugs and syndicates.

"If these reports are verified and proven true, then this is what "creeping narco-politics" is all about," he said. *With reports from Norman Bordadora, Armand N. Nocum, Gil Cabacungan Jr. and Nelson Flores in Manila*

Long live Da king! What's he saying?

From page A1

progress of his presidential campaign since it started on Feb. 10.

"We felt that his (Poe's) message to the people was not getting across," said spokesperson Rep. Francis Escudero (NPC, Sorsogon) quite candidly.

Poe met with Escudero and his general campaign manager, Sen. Vicente "Tito" Sotto III, at an undisclosed place in Makati.

Escudero said: "We're assessing the campaign and we're making the necessary adjustments."

In what areas does Da King need to brush up on?

Escudero said: "Part of it is media. FPJ wants to reach out to more people in the same way that people want to see more of him."

Poe had been mobbed by adoring crowds in his initial sorties in Bulacan, Bataan and Pangasinan. But the activities consisted mostly of riding in the back of pickup trucks, waving, handshaking and introducing stars performing for free.

He has not really discussed his platform with the voters or with media, and has limited his talk time to a 10-minute speech per province.

Reporters have raised a few complaints with Poe's campaign organizers:

- Lack of access to Da King, forcing journalists to hustle their way through crowds to "ambush" Poe.
- Rough treatment from the action king's security personnel derisively called "hawi boys."
- Late and rarely followed schedule of FPJ sorties—it's like a call time for a movie set.

Other presidential candidates like President Macapagal-Arroyo, former Education Secretary Raul Roco and Sen. Panfilo Lacson make it a point to allot quality time for journalists on the campaign trail.

According to Escudero, Poe's campaign team will make every effort to see to it that rallies and motorcades are not delayed.

Escudero was appointed spokesperson a few days after the campaign started, taking over one of the functions of former Press Secretary Rod Reyes who is now media bureau chief of the Poe-led Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino.

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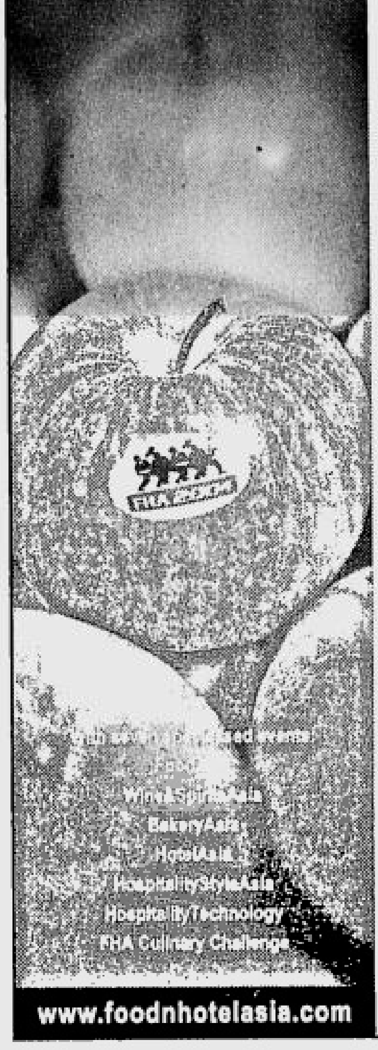

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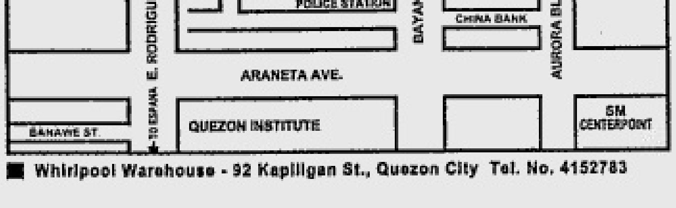

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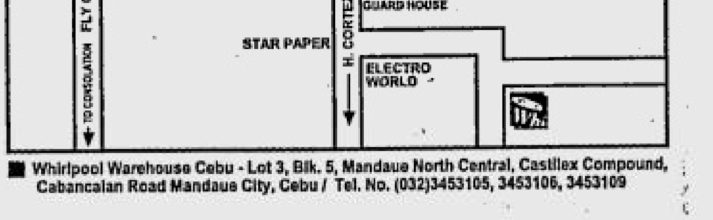

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FILE photo of former President Joseph Estrada swearing into office Artemio Tuquero as justice secretary on Feb. 15, 2000.

MEMBERS of the Western Police District undergo training as they prepare for possible outbreak of violence on Thursday when the Supreme Court takes up the highly controversial citizenship case of front-running presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr.

ERIK ARAZAS

Erap's justice secretary says FPJ not a natural-born Filipino

From page A1

The former justice secretary said he was expressing his own opinion "as an academician" and not the position of the INC, which, according to him, has yet to decide whom to support in the presidential race.

He said the INC would come out with the names of its favored candidates in the national elections by mid-March.

"Even assuming that FPJ was legitimized, he could not be considered a citizen of the Philippines at or from birth because legitimation, under the Old Civil Code, shall be effective only from the date of the marriage and does not retroact to the date of birth," he said.

Tuquero noted the "undisputed fact" that Poe was born on Aug. 20, 1939 to Fernando Pou, a Filipino, and Bessie Kelly, an American, who were married on Sept. 16, 1940, "or more than a year after his birth."

American law

Under American law, Poe is a "natural-born American citizen," according to one of the lawyers who petitioned the Supreme Court to disqualify the actor.

Lawyer Maria Jeanette Tecson cited the United States Citizenship and Naturalization Handbook, which said that illegitimate children born to an American mother between May 24, 1934 and Jan. 13, 1941, "acquired US citizenship at birth."

"Out-of-wedlock children born to a US citizen mother between May 24, 1934 and Jan. 13, 1941 acquired US citizenship at birth through the general provision of the 1934 act, which granted US citizenship to children born abroad to a US citizen parent," the handbook said.

Oral arguments

"Since the natural father in such cases is not considered the legal father, the retention requirement when one parent is a non-citizen does not apply. The citizenship acquired under this provision is not affected by subsequent legitimation of the child," it added.

Tecson said she would use the handbook to shore up her case that Poe should be disqualified during the oral arguments at the Supreme Court tomorrow.

Tuquero stopped short of calling for Poe's disqualification, saying that it was "up to the Supreme Court to decide."

"This is my opinion but the Constitution is clear that the President should be a natural-born citizen. And there is serious doubt as to FPJ's being a natural-born citizen," he said.

Tuquero denied the allegation that he came out with the opinion because he was supporting the candidacy of Sen. Panfilo Lacson, another presidential candidate of the opposition.

Tuquero served as one of Lacson's lawyers in the Kuratong Baleleng case, but this did not necessarily mean that he was supporting Lacson, according to the former justice secretary.

Asked about his difference of opinion with Estrada and his predecessor at the Department of Justice, Estelito Mendoza, who is now one of Poe's lawyers, Tuquero said he was "apolitical" and came out only "with what is right."

Tuquero served as Estrada's justice secretary from February 2000 to January 2001.

POE: Getting his message across to the people is proving to be a king-size headache for the king of Philippine movies.

In his comment, Benipayo said Poe followed the citizenship of his American mother and not of his Filipino father because at the time of the actor's birth, his parents were not yet legally married.

Similar

Benipayo's reasoning was the same as Tuquero's.

"The rulings of this honorable court are clear that when a child is born out of wedlock, he acquires the citizenship of the only legally known parent—the mother. In other words, only legitimate children follow the citizenship of the father and that illegitimate children are under the parental authority of the mother and follow her nationality, not that of the illegitimate father," Benipayo said.

"Simply stated, he is not a citizen of the Philippines," he added.

Benipayo said the subsequent marriage of Poe's parents did not legitimize him because under the Civil Code, only natural children who have been recognized by the parents may be considered legitimated by the subsequent marriage.

Poe has not presented any proof that he was acknowledged by his father either in his birth certificate, last will, or any other authentic document, the solicitor general said.

Benipayo said the Commission on Elections had the power to disqualify candidates if they lacked the necessary qualifications.

Estrada opinion

As expected, Estrada dismissed the claims, including Tuquero's, that Poe, his close friend, was not a natural-born Filipino.

"*Wala 'yun* (That's nothing)," Estrada said in a phone interview from his detention compound in Tanay, Rizal, of the petitions seeking to disqualify Poe.

Asked about Tuquero's opinion, Estrada said: "*Hindi ko alam 'yun* (I know nothing about that)."

But one thing Estrada is sure of: "He (Poe) is a sure winner."

"FPJ will set a new record in presidential elections and will surpass even mine," Estrada said.

Estrada was referring to his landslide victory in the 1998 presidential election with a total of 10.9 million votes. His closest rival Speaker Jose de Venecia came in second with 4.3 million votes.

Estrada sounded in good spirits as he hosted lunch to celebrate the birthday of his son Jinggoy, a member of Poe's senatorial slate.

Among those present were Poe's vice presidential running mate Sen. Loren Legarda and senatorial candidates Juan Ponce Enrile, Francisco Tatad, Boots Anson Roa, Amina Rasul, Salvador Escudero and reelectionist Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr.

Pimentel said he believed the Supreme Court would rule that Poe was a natural-born Filipino.

"I told him (Estrada) that based on my reading of the Constitution, there is no way for the Supreme Court to rule but to uphold that FPJ is a natural-born Filipino," Pimentel said.

Confident of a Poe victory, Estrada said that the KNP would be "working double time for Loren." *With a report from Christine O. Avendaño*

'DA KING'—with his running mate Sen. Loren Legarda and senatorial slate—stars in a grand rally in his hometown, San Carlos, Pangasinan, Monday night.

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Transport sector revs up for crippling strike

OPERATORS of Metro Manila and provincial bus firms yesterday asked the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board to increase public transportation fare by as much as P2 for the first 5 kilometers to offset the rising cost of operations.

LTFRB Chair Ma. Elena Bautista said three groups of Metro Manila bus operators also sought an additional fare increase of 37 centavos for each succeeding kilometer, while the provincial group asked for an 18-centavo hike per succeeding kilometer.

Bautista said that the Office of the Solicitor General, which represents the public, has expressed its objection to the fare hike.

The minimum fare on ordinary Metro Manila buses is P4, while the air-conditioned units charge P9.

Also, jeepney groups from Bulacan have asked for a P1.50 fare hike, increasing the basic rate from P4 to P5.50.

"We have yet to receive a consolidated petition of the jeepney groups," Bautista said.

The board chief said that they have endorsed the request of the Bulacan Alliance of Transport Association (Batas) to the LTFRB Region III unit.

On Monday, jeepney drivers in Bulacan stopped operations and demanded either a rollback in oil prices or a fare increase.

Because of the strike, classes were suspended and thousands of passengers were stranded.

The National Capital Region Police Office has instructed its men to prepare for rallies that could paralyze public transportation in the metropolis.

The transport groups earlier demanded the resignation of the LTFRB chair, according to Medardo Roda, president of the Pagkakaisa ng mga Samahan ng mga Tsuper at Opereytor Nationwide.

Should the government again junk the demand for a fare increase, then the various transport groups would stage a nationwide strike two weeks from now, said Efren de Luna, head of the group PCDO-ACTO. *Tina Santos, Edson Tandoc Jr. and Clarissa Batino*

Legal battle looms over Lapu-Lapu statue

By Tarra Quismundo

LAPU-LAPU is hailed as the first Malay to repel a foreign invader from the archipelago.

Now, the chieftain from what is now Cebu may be facing another battle to fend off the expulsion of his 30-foot statue from the Rizal Park in Manila.

"Off hand, we are thinking of legal action to resolve this issue," said National Historical Institute chair Ambeth Ocampo in a phone interview.

He said that the six-member NHI board was set to discuss the issue in the first week of March.

Ocampo said Lapu-Lapu's statue was "simply out of place" and that majority of the NHI board would vote to take the matter to court.

Former Tourism Secretary Richard Gordon, who pushed the construction of the statue at the Rizal Park's Teodoro Valencia (formerly Agrifina) Circle, said, "The NHI can sue me."

The institute said the park, named after national hero Dr. Jose Rizal, was declared a national shrine in 1995 through Presidential Decree 1505.

The decree prohibits "any person to modify, alter, repair or destroy the original features of any national shrine, monument or landmark."

The P16-million statue, a gift from the Korean Freedom League in honor of Filipino soldiers who fought in the Korean War in the '50s, now stands 500 meters behind Rizal's monument.

Ocampo said Gordon, who is now running for senator under the ticket of President Macapagal-Arroyo could have pushed the construction of the statue "to get the Cebuano vote."

STANDING so vigilant, the giant statue of Lapu-Lapu was meant to embody the readiness of a hero to safeguard the islands and those in it—including those who want him out of the national Park in Luneta.

ERIK ARAZAS

NBI nabs Rizal fiscal for extortion

NATIONAL Bureau of Investigation agents on Monday allegedly caught red-handed a government prosecutor receiving extortion money from a client.

Alexander Antonio, 54, a resident of Marikina City, was arrested in Morong, Rizal, shortly after members of the NBI's Intelligence Special Operations Division received a complaint from Placido Mendoza, a car theft suspect, according to bureau officials.

Mendoza told investigators that Antonio, an assistant prosecutor of Rizal province, had asked for P20,000 in exchange of the dropping of the case.

In a report, NBI-Isod chief Oscar Embido said that the complainants in the car theft case had already withdrawn their suit against Mendoza.

Mendoza told investigators that a simple misunderstanding had led to the filing of the car theft complaint. But Antonio allegedly refused to dismiss the case unless Mendoza gave him some money.

After Mendoza reportedly gave Antonio the money, the prosecutor allegedly demanded an additional P5,000.

It was then that Mendoza sought the NBI's help.

As soon as Antonio received the marked money from Mendoza on Monday, NBI agents took the suspect into custody. *Leila Salaverria*

WPD ready for swarm of Fernando Poe fans

By Leila Salaverria

THEY have been through the throngs of ousted president Joseph Estrada and are ready to face the fans of presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr., who is facing a disqualification case before the Supreme Court.

Western Police District director Chief Supt. Pedro Bulaong yesterday said that 1,000 members of the Civil Disturbance Management Group (CDMG) were already on alert in case supporters of Poe storm Manila.

"We're ready for them," Bulaong said, as if mimicking the tough guy stance of Poe in his campaign speeches.

Poe, who has been topping recent surveys of candidates most likely to win the presidency, faces the prospect of being booted out of the race following the filing of a disqualification case against him on grounds that he was not a natural-born Filipino citizen.

Bulaong led the inspection and training of CDMG at the Quirino Grandstand, where the 1,000 helmet-and-vest-clad and truncheon-wielding policemen were briefed in preparation for the expected promulgation on the disqualification case on Thursday.

WPD spokesperson Chief Insp. Gerry Agunod said the district was observing the no permit, no rally policy. Should the pro-Poe groups hold protest rallies without permits, they would first be asked to pull out. Should they defy police orders, they would be dispersed.

Agunod also said that aside from the crowd control operatives, the rest of the 3,500-strong force of the WPD had been put on standby in case the number of Poe fans swell and threaten to overwhelm the 1,000 CDMG men.

Lito Pimentel accused of trying to kill wife

PIMENTEL

THE WIFE of Lito Pimentel has accused the actor of trying to kill her.

Ma. Chrysantine Pimentel, 28, a businesswoman and resident of Murphy, Cubao filed a frustrated parricide charge before the Quezon City Prosecutor's Office against her husband, real name Joselito Pimentel.

In her statement, Ma. Chrysantine claimed that the incident took place on Feb. 9, after she and her husband had engaged in sexual intercourse at her residence.

"Are you done, was that it?" she reportedly asked her husband after intercourse.

Upset, Pimentel reportedly got out a knife and told his wife: "Do you think that I could not kill you?"

Pimentel, of Tandang Sora, Quezon City, then allegedly hit his wife and tried to stab her. But the woman was able to parry the knife, which grazed her left thigh.

When the woman fell to the floor, Pimentel allegedly kicked and punched her.

The INQUIRER tried to contact Pimentel, but an employee of ABS-CBN, where the actor is working on a television series, said that Pimentel was not at the station. *Tina Santos*

METROBRIEFS

Suspect breaks

A SUSPECT in the killing Thursday last week of couple Romeo Quesa, 75, and Pastora, 73, in Rodriguez, Rizal, confessed after his arrest Monday. Crisologo Agapay, 32, an electrician from Caloocan City, broke down during investigation and admitted that he acted as the lookout as his companions Freddie Gito, 29, of Cainta, Rizal, and a certain Jun, robbed and killed the victims. The three men were helping build the house of the Quesas when the incident took place. *Luige del Puerto*

Fake credit cards

THE POLICE arrested on Monday Raphy Sicat, 28, of Muntinlupa City, and Malik Salim, 24, of Sampaloc, Manila, for using "fake" credit cards in buying P428,000 worth of goods in shops at the Shangri-La Edsa mall in Mandaluyong City. The police said the cards seized from the suspects had authentic numbers which were stamped on bogus cards of HSBC, Citibank and Standard Chartered banks. *Luige del Puerto*

Planners meet

A RARE lecture on the country's economic development will be held on Feb. 20, 1 p.m. at the Penthouse of the Development Bank of the Philippines in Makati City. The speakers include Prof. Gerardo Sicat, Prof. Solita Monsod, Prof. Cielito Habito and Socioeconomic Planning Secretary and concurrent Neda Director-General Romulo Neri. Queries at rosemarie.san_pascual@up.edu.ph at 920-54-81, Benjie Turiano of Neda (bdturiano@neda.gov.ph) at 631-3757, Jojo Cajita of National Statistics Office at 716-0734, or Luming Burgos of Tariff Commission at 924-3123.

Plaridel rites

THE SAMAHANG Plaridel, Inc. will hold the induction of its charter members and first Fellowship Night at the Kalayaan Hall of Club Filipino tomorrow night at 7:30. Samahan president Rolando Estabillo said Philippine Star publisher and SPI chairman Max Soliven would induct the members. A Fellowship Night will follow.

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SPORTS TV
Compiled by L. Manguiat

BASKETBALL: NBA Hardwood Classics-Lakers vs Celtics, Game 4, 1987 Finals; 8:30 a.m.; Solar Sports—Boston's Larry Bird has just hit a three-pointer to put the Celtics up by one. Los Angeles' Magic Johnson then hits a hook shot from the foul line area to put the visitors up by one with seconds remaining. After a Boston timeout, Bird gets one last shot to win the game, but his 3-pointer doesn't connect. Magic and the Lakers go on to take the series, 4-2.

Schedules subject to change without prior notice.

SPORTS

E-mail: pr_sports@inquirer.com.ph

Editor **Teddyvic S. Melendres**
Assistant Editor **Edwin M. Villanueva**

VIETNAM BONUS

RP gets 49th gold in SEAG

THE PHILIPPINES got a bonus of sorts yesterday after the organizing committee of the 22nd Southeast Asian Games in Vietnam declared the Filipinos winner of the 4x200-meter freestyle relay two months after the close of the biennial event.

The victory of swimmers Mark Kalaw, Miguel Mendoza, Carlo Piccio and Miguel Molina—earlier nullified by swimming's organizing body due to an alleged technical infraction—raised the Philippines' final gold medal tally from 48 to 49.

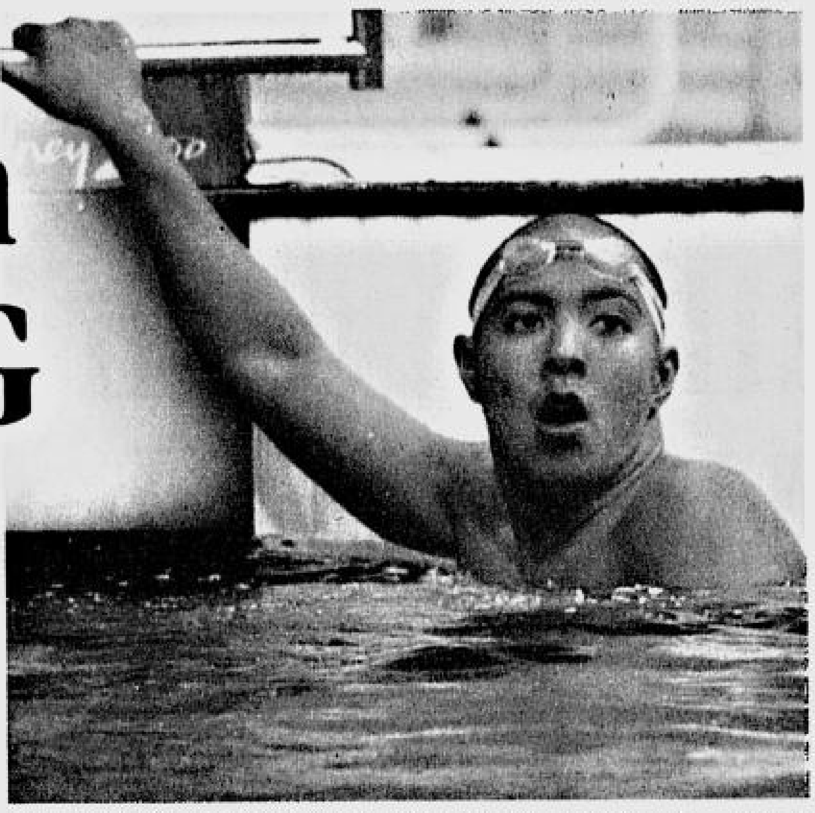
"This is a big boost for Philippine sports. I am happy for our swimmers who worked hard to win honors for flag and country in Vietnam," said Philippine Olympic Committee president Celso Dayrit, who received the letter (dated Feb. 11, 2004) from Vietnam Olympic Committee vice president and secretary general Hoang Vinh Giang late Monday.

According to Hoang, the organizing committee of swimming "found out the mistake made by Omega." Thus, the Philippines was awarded the gold medal, Malaysia the silver and Singapore the bronze. The bronze presented to Thailand was withdrawn.

The Filipinos clocked 7 minutes 42.75 seconds for the event, which they won for the first time in more than a decade.

Philippine delegation Chef de Mission Julian Camacho signed the letter of appeal, which Dayrit endorsed to the Vietnamese games organizers.

"Nagbunga din and hirap at pagod ng mga bata (The boys' hard work paid off," said swimming president Monchito Ilagan. "The boys (Kalaw, Mendoza, Piccio and Molina) deserved that gold. We saw the race and we know we won fair and square."



MENDOZA: Initially blamed for "jumping too soon" in the disputed relay. PDI PHOTO

By taking the gold previously credited to the Malaysians, the Filipinos finished six golds ahead of Malaysia in the overall scoreboard.

The victory boosted the Filipinos' total gold output in swimming to three. Mendoza and Molina topped the 1500-meter and 200-meter freestyle events.

Camacho, who like Dayrit, supported the appeal of Ilagan, secretary general Chito Rivera and other officials and swimmers' parents during the Vietnam Games, was delighted to hear the good news.

"At least, the swimmers and their supporters were rewarded for their efforts," said Camacho.

Knights, Altas dispute first finals berth

NCAA champion Letran and Perpetual Help College of Rizal tangle at 9 a.m. today with the winner advancing to the collegiate finals of the Metro Manila eliminations and the National Students Basketball Championships next month.

The Knights and the Altas open the semifinals, also featuring the match between University of Manila and Philippine Maritime Institute at 11:30 p.m., at the Rizal Coliseum.

The victor between UM and PMI also qualifies to the national finals slated March 1-7 in Lucena City.

Since three slots are allotted to Metro Manila, the losers will figure in a knockout game on Friday for the right to make the national finals.

Women's division semis matches pit Adamson against De La Salle-Manila at noon and Ateneo against University of Santo Tomas at 1:30 p.m.

High school matches of the eliminations pit La Salle-Greenhills against La Salle-Zobel at 3 p.m. and PCCR against PCU at 4:30 p.m.

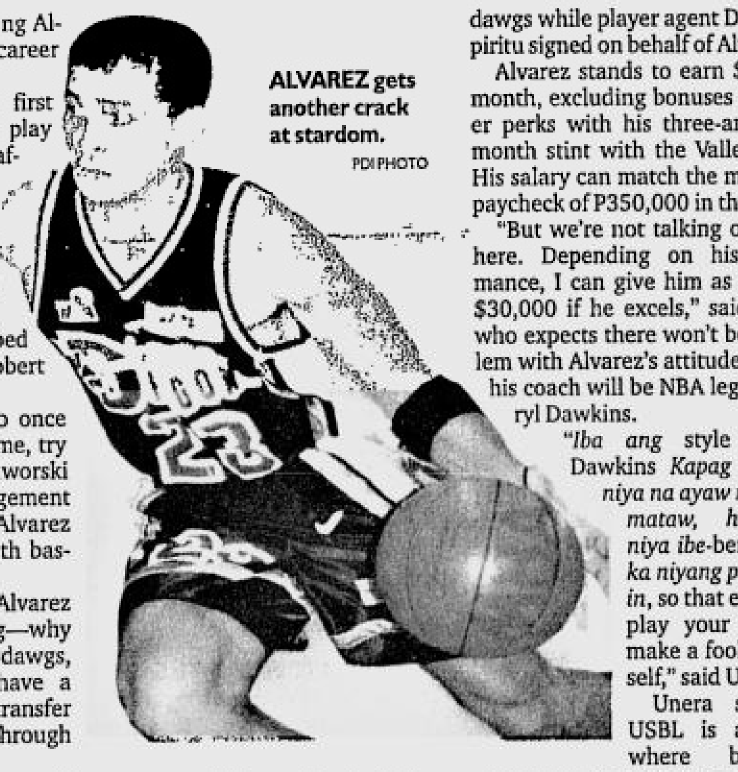
Games Today
(Rizal Coliseum)
9 a.m.—PHCR vs Letran
10:30 a.m.—UM vs PMI
12 n.n.—Adamson vs DLS-Manila (W)
1:30 p.m.—Ateneo vs UST (W)
3 p.m.—LS-Greenhills vs LS-Zobel
4:30 p.m.—PCCR vs PCU

USBL champ taps Alvarez

$5,000 pay for first Pinoy to play in American league

SPURNED by local teams, Bong Alvarez resurrected his career abroad.

Alvarez will become the first homegrown Filipino ever to play in a US professional league after inking a one-conference contract with United States Basketball League (USBL) champions Pennsylvania Valleydawgs yesterday.



ALVAREZ gets another crack at stardom. PDI PHOTO

The 6-foot Alvarez, dubbed Mr. Excitement, has Sen. Robert Jaworski to thank for.

After seeing Alvarez, who once made 71 points in a PBA game, try out for the FedEx Express, Jaworski talked to the FedEx management about the possibility of Alvarez rekindling his love affair with basketball.

FedEx team manager Lito Alvarez suggested the next big thing—why not a stint with the Valleydawgs, with whom the Express have a standing agreement for the transfer of basketball technology through coaches and players.

Jaworski and Alvarez arranged the tryout with Valleydawgs manager Sam Unera, who liked what he saw.

Unera said Bong fits the Valleydawgs' razzle-dazzle style to a T after yesterday's signing at the Hyatt. Unera signed on behalf of the Valleydawgs while player agent Danny Espiritu signed on behalf of Alvarez.

Alvarez stands to earn $5,000 a month, excluding bonuses and other perks with his three-and-a-half month stint with the Valleydawgs. His salary can match the maximum paycheck of P350,000 in the PBA.

"But we're not talking of money here. Depending on his performance, I can give him as much as $30,000 if he excels," said Unera, who expects there won't be a problem with Alvarez's attitude because his coach will be NBA legend Darryl Dawkins.

"*Iba ang* style *ni* Mr. Dawkins *Kapag nakikita niya na ayaw mong humataw, hindi ka niya ibe*-bench. *Lalo ka niyang paglalaruin*, so that either you play your best, or make a fool of yourself," said Unera.

Unera said the USBL is a league where basketball stars are noticed by NBA scouts.

"This is Bong's last chance to show his worth, and I know he will not waste it," Unera said.

BAP-Bapi tug-of-war not doing basketball any good, says Lipa

By June Navarro and Marc Anthony Reyes

JOE Lipa, one of Philippine basketball's coaching icons, sees the country's favorite sport plunging into an abyss the moment local basketball groups go separate ways.

The colorful mentor's pronouncement came just when every sporting body seems inclined to have a say on the fate of the Basketball Association of the Philippines, including Congress.

Rep. Monico Puentevella yesterday said the House Committee on Youth and Sports, which he chairs, will launch a congressional inquiry into the BAP leadership dispute to settle the issue once and for all.

"It's not doing the sport any good. Unity is one of the ingredients for success," said Lipa, referring to the power struggle between the Basketball Association of the Philippines and the BAP Inc.

Armed with a court decision, Bapi president Nic Jorge is challenging the legitimacy of the ruling BAP headed by Tiny Literal, claiming that Bapi is the genuine amateur basketball body.

However, the Philippine Sports Commission and the Philippine Olympic Committee recognize the BAP, as it is the group sanctioned by the international basketball federation (Fiba).

"The more divided we are, the more RP basketball will suffer," said Lipa, many time mentor of Philippine teams to various international meets.

Appointed recently as head coach of the national team (20 and under), Lipa is in the initial stages of forming the RP squad for the South East Asian Basketball Association tournament in July. The top two countries in the SEABA advance to the ABC junior championships in August.

Lipa started a series of tryouts for the national team last Sunday with UP's Jay-R Reyes, Ateneo's LA Tenorio and Johan Uichico joining more than 70 aspirants.

"I want the team to be armed with speed and quickness and at the same time possess the ceiling to compete with taller players from China, Korea and Japan," said Lipa.

Along this line, Puentevella said a congressional inquiry can be initiated to make sure the country will send its best team to international competitions, especially the Asian Games.

"But that," he added, is "as long as a national team uses government funds in any form or uses the Philippine flag."

The Bacolod lawmaker, who was also a former PSC commissioner, said: "The PSC or the POC should solve this problem or we shall be forced to take a stand on this matter."

PSC chair Eric Buhain yesterday appeared at the PSA Forum to say that the agency will only support the group recognized by the POC.

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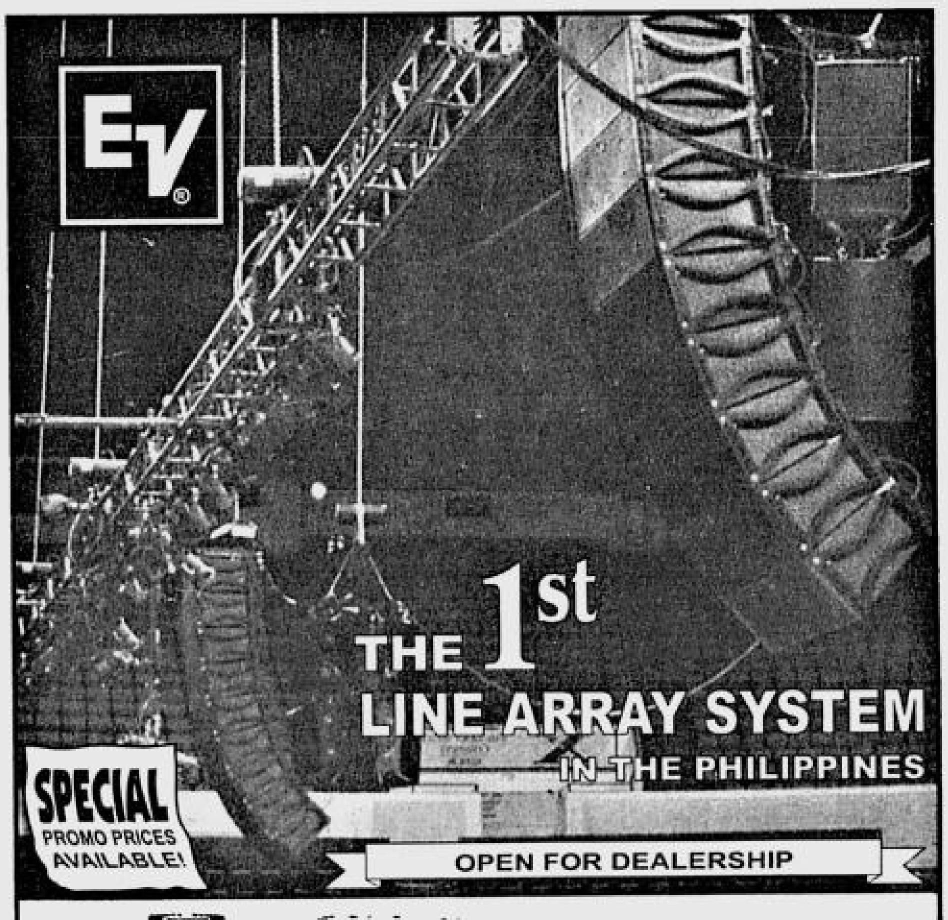

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BLAZE

Borja hits hole-in-one jackpot again

CEBU's Roderick Borja hit the hole-in-one jackpot for the second straight year and stole the opening round show yesterday from team event leaders Apo and Iloilo and individual play frontrunner Julius Susarno in the 15th Uratex National Caddies Championship at the Valley executive course in Antipolo.

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The ace came after Borja had scored a similar feat on No. 6 of the same course last year and won P55,000.

Borja stands to become the biggest winner of the P2 million tournament even if his team fails to land in the money.

Apo and Iloilo scored 221s to open up a two-shot lead over Lumbia, Bacolod and host Valley in the four-to-play, three-to-count team event. Mount Malindang and Negros Occidental were next at 224, while defending champion Wack Wack fell six behind at 227.

Ranil Glimada carded a 72 to lead scoring for Apo. Elmer Saban scored a 74 and Jonel Ababa added a 75. Counting for Iloilo were Rene Menor's 72, Rey Sinfuego's 74 and Orlando Sequinto's 75.

Susarno assembled an even-par 70 and took a two-shot lead in the men's individual competition of the tournament the late business tycoon Robert Cheng launched in 1998.

Valley's Alvin Mijares, Ruben de la Rosa of Wack Wack and Puerto Azul's Jessie Alit came up with 72s to share second place with Menor and Glimada.

The 54-hole women's play fires off today.

PGAP fund-raiser today

MEMBERS of the Professional Golf Association of the Philippines play for a cause in an 18-hole fund-raiser today at the Villamor Golf Club.

Bantay Bata 163 ABS-CBN Foundation is the main beneficiary of the VIP Celebrity Pro-Am.

Major sponsors are Mizuno/Master Sports, Handog Marketing and IWSI. The other sponsors are Sen. Tito Sotto, Sen. Loren Legarda, Lt. Gen. Nestor Santillan, Jack Arroyo, Seibu Inc. of Fugio Fujii, Champion, Regent Travel Corp., Ricardo Bedayo, Izakaya Kenta, The Junior Golf League Inc., Cargohaus, USGTF, W-Eagle Pro Shop, Global Holiday, Red Bull, Pisanti and ALPHI.

The tilt is the first project of the new PGAP board headed by Sarge Negrido. Members are Vic Granada (vice president), Jun Cedo (secretary), Tony Arevalo (treasurer), Felix Fernando (auditor), Jun Bustamante (adviser) and lawyer Alex Avisado (deputy commissioner).

Long, Ellis return to San Mig, Ginebra

By Trina Ibarle

ART Long of San Miguel Beer and Rosell Ellis of Barangay Ginebra are the only familiar faces in the roster of imports in the PBA Fiesta Conference which kicks off this Sunday at the Araneta Coliseum.

The league yesterday released the list of imports who will suit up for nine of the 10 teams seeing action in the PBA's transition tournament.

Presented during the official measurement at the PBA Office were the 6-foot-7 Long, Mark Sanford of Coca-Cola, Lenny Cooke of Purefoods, Galen "Leslie" Young of Alaska, Lamayn Wilson of Sta. Lucia Realty, Alvin Jefferson of FedEx, Carlos Wheeler of Red Bull Barako, Marek Ondera of Shell and Randy Holcomb of Talk 'N Text.

Only Ellis of the Gin Kings, who will be arriving this Thursday, has yet to be measured.

Expected to provide the fireworks this conference is the 6-foot-6 Wilson, a Troy State University standout, who showed flashes of brilliance in the Realtors' frontline during a recent tuneup game.

Also fancied as a prized find is Sanford, a towering forward-center. The 6-foot-7 high-leaper was the second round pick of the Miami Heat in the 1997 NBA draft.

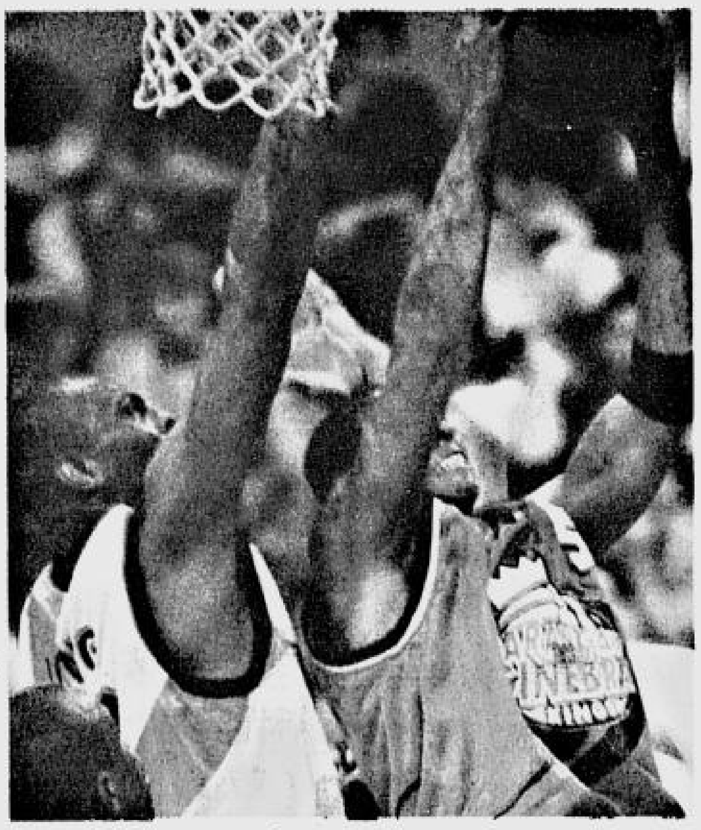
This season's tallest import, at 6-foot-8, is Jefferson, an Auburn University cager who formerly suited up for the Harlem Globetrotters. The shortest, at 6-4, is Young, a veteran of the the Continental Basketball Association.

The 6-foot-5 Cooke boasts a stint in the China Basketball Association where he reinforced the Shanghai Sharks, the former team of Houston Rockets slotman Yao Ming.

Wheeler, a speedy 6-6 defender, hails from Egypt and played for the Pensacola Junior College and later in the Israeli league.

The 6-foot-6 Holcomb played for San Diego State.

Ondera, a native of Denmark and the only white import this conference, stands 6-5 and played for the University of California-Irvine and the Danish Super League.


SAN Miguel Beer's Art Long (left) and Barangay Ginebra's Rosell Ellis will strut their stuff again in the Fiesta Conference. ROMY HOMILLADA

2 GMs blast Torre's Olympiad stand

By Trina Ibarle

IT SEEMS like the fighting is far from over.

Grandmasters Joey Antonio and Bong Villamayor yesterday criticized fellow GM Eugene Torre for his "inconsistent stand" regarding the proposal to give GMs automatic seedings to the country's squad in the Chess Olympiad.

The executive committee of the National Chess Federation of the Philippines (NCFP) has yet to set the final criteria to be used to select the members of the team to the annual championship slated in October in Majorca, Spain.

Torre earlier said he was willing to give up his automatic seeding to give way to other up-and-coming chess players to qualify to the team.

"*Parati niyang* (Torre) *gustong* ma-seed (Torre always wants to be seeded)," said Villamayor, mocking what he described was Torre's change of heart.

He said the NCFP was formed partly because Torre, Asia's first chess grandmaster, also had disapproved of the qualifying system set by the defunct Philippine Chess Federation, which refused to seed the GMs outright to the 2000 Olympiad team.

Antonio noted that Torre did not also join the qualifying tournaments for the 1999 Asian team championships "because he was not seeded."

Torre and NCFP secretary general Samuel Estimo drew the ire of Antonio and Villamayor last month after it was reported that the federation was supporting a proposed P1.5 million chess duel between Torre and International Master Mark Paragua, currently the country's No 1. player.

Torre said he agreed to compete in the qualifiers because the interest of local chess outweighs whatever personal gain he may get from his Olympiad stint.

"Personally, I would like to be seeded. But other players would feel that it is hard to have a chance to qualify if there is automatic seeding," he said.

Isn't giving the RP flag to the pawnbroker a crime?

BARE EYE

Recab Trinidad

BASKETBALL being a national passion, there came the charge that it was not only the national team which has been pawned.

There was this uneasy feeling that the Philippine flag itself has been dragged into the pawnshop.

As expected, the damaging shots thrown at the Basketball Association of the Philippines for its shocking move to stop the PBA from forming a full-pro selection to represent the country in major international tournaments came in a torrent.

The guy who got it smack in the chin was BAP secretary general Graham Lim.

Some of the shots, curses actually, could lead media censors to move in, the reason they would not be printed here.

People could not however understand how Lim, a subject of deportation proceedings, continues to defend the port and call the shots while his immediate superior, BAP president Tiny Literal, is nowhere in sight.

Lim is now singing a new tune, saying dumping the PBA was only his opinion.

Of course, nobody could specify how much that opinion cost. What happened is that Cebuena-Lhuillier, with the blessings of Lim, has proceeded on a nationwide talent search and tryouts, with an eye on forming future national squads.

***

The case is very sensitive and Rep. Monico Puentebella has assured Congress would have no choice but do its share if the POC and PSC failed to remedy the mess.

Actually, Puentebella explained, there's a rule banning sponsors branding in both the SEA Games and the Asiad.

He vowed to restore things in their proper perspective.

Still, the strongest move announced against the cheap BAP plan to dump the PBA program for international meets came from the Philippine Olympic Committee.

Sensing the urgency, POC president Celso Dayrit said they would be forced to step in to ensure the country gets the best possible representation in basketball in all Asian tournaments.

Dayrit said it's indeed the role of national sports associations, like the BAP, to have a program that will develop and produce the best athletes that could give honor to the country.

But the POC chief quickly added it's the paramount duty of these national associations to send the very best to represent the country.

***

The Lim-Lhuillier deal smacked of a sellout and the POC could again be charged of fence-sitting once it fails to act decisively.

Dayrit himself said it would be foolhardy, to say the least, for RP not to capitalize on the PBA which undoubtedly has the best players in the country.

If it feels the national team is being shortchanged, Dayrit said the POC could step in since "it has the final approving power on athletes competing in the Asiad and SEA Games."

He stressed that it's the POC which evaluates and approves Filipino athletes to major international events.

So will Dayrit, after sensing the dangers wrought by Lim, finally crack the whip?

The popular clamor is for the POC, with its vast powers, to stand up and fight for urgent reforms, mainly in the amateur basketball backyard.

***

Two-time Fiba president Lito Puyat said Lim's tie-up with Cebuana-Lhuillier "does not guarantee the formation of a team strong enough to "help us reclaim our Asian cage dominance."

"We need the PBA, we need the help of all basketball stakeholders in the country," Puyat told the Manila Daily Bulletin Monday.

He said Lim seems unaware of his responsibility as a top basketball official.

"He appears bent on destroying Philippine basketball," Puyat stressed.

For its part, Lhuillier said it's there mainly to help, and it will always stand to be counted.

Well, speaking of commitment, PBA Commissioner Noli Eala assured that it's always been there.

Unfortunately, he said, it's the BAP that has disapproved of their total commitment (*Sila naman ang umaayaw sa amin.*)

***

Similarly stunned by the BAP snub, PBA Chair Buddy Encarnado said the bigger commitment is to Philippine basketball and the general public.

"Can you imagine us having the best players and that they're not being made available for the national team. How can we be at peace with ourselves?" Encarnado asked.

Of course, Graham Lim could have been blinded by the grand possibilities that he overlooked the repercussions of his deal with his great sponsors.

I sincerely thought Lim, with his sensitive post, has learned to deal with people and groups like a true gentleman.

But the latest turn of events clearly showed he's still the shameless, shallow fixer of old.

"*Di pa kita na-ayos* Recah (Haven't fixed you yet) he coolly told me when our paths crossed during one Southeast Asian Games championship.

It felt like a slap, but I let him escape.

At least, Lim did not have the temerity to call me now to try and fix my views on the mess he has caused. He should thank himself for that.

(Most of the items and quotes in this column were culled from the reports of friends from other papers.)

SPORTSWATCH

Malaya's Cantor new PSA president

JIMMY Cantor of Malaya was elected president of the Philippine Sportswriters Association (PSA) during the general assembly of the country's oldest media organization yesterday at the Manila Pavilion. Cantor succeeded Bert Cuevas of the Manila Standard, who served two full terms since 2001. Cuevas is now an ex-officio member. Comprising the PSA board are Ding Marcelo of the Manila Bulletin, 1st vice president; Edwin Gabutina of Today, 2nd vice president; Aldrin Cardona of the Daily Tribune, secretary; Joe Antonio of People's Journal, treasurer; and Teddyvic Melendres of the Philippine Daily Inquirer, auditor. Lito Tacujan of The Philippine Star was named board chair while lifetime member Gus Villanueva is the board adviser. The board of directors are Recah Trinidad, Ernie Gonzales, Manolo Iñigo and Al Mendoza (Inquirer), Jimbo Gulle (Times), Rey Bancod (Tempo), Dennis Iñigo (Balita), Dina Marie Villena (Pilipino Star), Ana Federigan (Taliba), Ed Andaya (People's Tonight), Tito Deblois (Abante), Ronnie Nathanielsz (Standard), Joaquin Henson (Star), Camilo Mendez Jr. (Balita), and Enrique Gonzales (lifetime member). Gerry Ramos of the People's Journal was tasked to lead the search committee that will handle nominations for the PSA Awards Night.

33 early teams join Mendez Cup

THIRTY-THREE teams have signed up for the first Mendez Cup tournament slated at the Sta. Elena Golf Club on March 1. Organizing committee chair Joe Magsaysay said the tournament format requires teams of two players each to play scramble in the front nine and alternate shots coming back. Monark Group of Companies' AutoMekanika and Club 650 are the tournament's major sponsors. The Foundation Values for Training Center Inc. is staging the tournament to raise funds for the construction of the Tagaytay Training Center in Mendez, Cavite.

Senior golf tees off tomorrow at Agui

MORE than 150 senior golfers and guests will tee off at Camp Aguinaldo golf course tomorrow to launch the first of a series of bi-monthly golf tournaments lined up this year under the auspices of the Federation of Philippine Senior Golfers Inc. Federation president Frisco F. San Juan said businessman-sportsman Hermie Esguerra, chair of the tournament's main sponsor Herma group of companies, will hit the ceremonial drive along with Rep. San Juan, Aguinaldo GC GM Gen. Roberto Santiago, and Aguinaldo seniors and organizing committee chair Joey Policarpio. Tee-off time is from 6:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. A Sky-Bo motorcycle is at stake as hole-in-one prize on Hole No. 6.

Meeting to benefit RP blind sports

THE INTERNATIONAL Blind Sports Federation (IBSA) meeting this week at the Hotel Intercontinental Manila "will benefit our visually impaired sportsmen." This was announced yesterday by PSC commissioner Michael Barredo, who guested at the PSA Forum sponsored by Red Bull, Agfa Color and Pagcor at the Manila Pavilion. According to Barredo, PSC head for Special Concerns and IBSA Asia chair, the 3-in-1 event "will give our countrymen the chance to gain financial assistance and technical knowledge." Fifty delegates from 20 countries have so far confirmed their participation in the IBSA Asia Oceania Strategic Planning Conference which starts on Feb. 19. The conference primarily aims to strengthen ties among blind sports organizations in the Asian and Oceania countries.

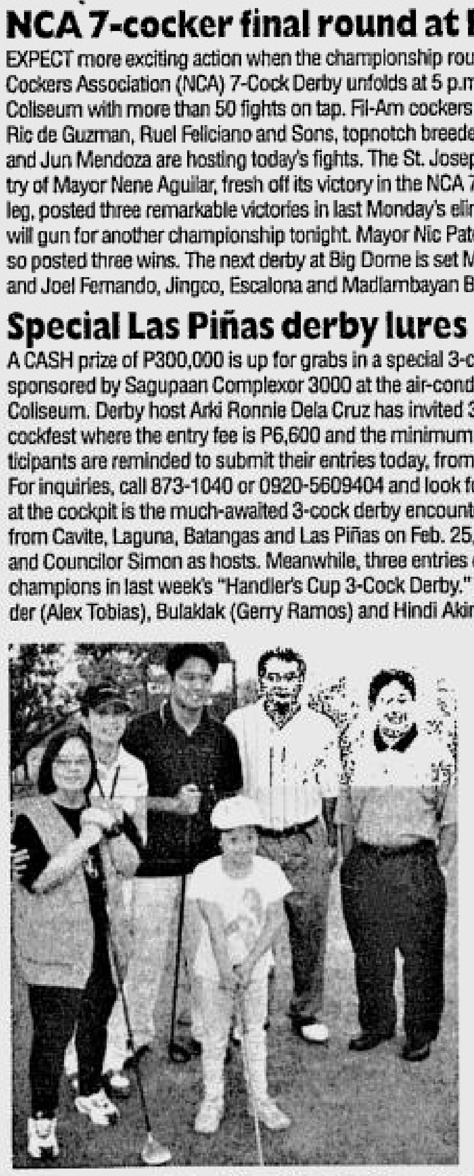
UNITY IN SPORTS: Sen. Robert Jaworski and Polytechnic University of the Philippines acting president Samuel M. Salvador (fourth from left) lead school presidents in a show of league unity during the opening ceremonies yesterday of the 16th State Colleges and Universities Athletics Association on the PUP campus. From left, Dr. Enrico Sampang of PhilSPCA, Dr. Nilo Rosas of PNU, Dr. Maura Bautista of EARIST, Dr. Salvador, Jaworski, Dr. Jose Macaballug of RTU and Dr. Fedeserio Camarao of TUP.

NCA 7-cocker final round at Big Dome

EXPECT more exciting action when the championship round of the National Cockers Association (NCA) 7-Cock Derby unfolds at 5 p.m. today at the Araneta Coliseum with more than 50 fights on tap. Fil-Am cockers Rene Medina and Ric de Guzman, Ruel Feliciano and Sons, topnotch breeder Boy Jiao of Rizal and Jun Mendoza are hosting today's fights. The St. Joseph Joke Joke Joke entry of Mayor Nene Aguilar, fresh off its victory in the NCA 7-Cock Derby second leg, posted three remarkable victories in last Monday's elimination round and will gun for another championship tonight. Mayor Nic Patenia's J and S 808 also posted three wins. The next derby at Big Dome is set March 1 and 3 with Jet and Joel Fernando, Jingco, Escalona and Madlambayan Brothers as hosts.

Special Las Piñas derby lures 35 entries

A CASH prize of P300,000 is up for grabs in a special 3-cock derby tonight sponsored by Sagupaan Complexor 3000 at the air-conditioned Las Piñas Coliseum. Derby host Arki Ronnie Dela Cruz has invited 35 participants in the cockfest where the entry fee is P6,600 and the minimum bet P5,500. All participants are reminded to submit their entries today, from 7 a.m. to 12 noon. For inquiries, call 873-1040 or 0920-5609404 and look for Julius. Also slated at the cockpit is the much-awaited 3-cock derby encounter of leading breeders from Cavite, Laguna, Batangas and Las Piñas on Feb. 25, with Esmer Ernaiz and Councilor Simon as hosts. Meanwhile, three entries emerged as co-champions in last week's "Handler's Cup 3-Cock Derby." These were Alexander (Alex Tobias), Bulaklak (Gerry Ramos) and Hindi Akin (engineer Wang Yu).


'TEE-UP FOR DOWNS 2' The Down Syndrome Association of the Philippines is holding its fund raising golf tournament tomorrow at Manila Southwoods. Tee time is from 6:30 to 8:30 a.m. Tickets are available at the DSAPI office, with tel. 895-9642 (Adette) 721-5286 (Portia).

Borja hits hole-in-one jackpot again

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The ace came after Borja had scored a similar feat on No. 6 of the same course last year and won P55,000.

Borja stands to become the biggest winner of the P2 million tournament even if his team fails to land in the money.

Apo and Iloilo scored 221s to open up a two-shot lead over Lumbia, Bacolod and host Valley in the four-to-play, three-to-count team event. Mount Malindang and Negros Occidental were next at 224, while defending champion Wack Wack fell six behind at 227.

Ranil Glimada carded a 72 to lead scoring for Apo. Elmer Saban scored a 74 and Jonel Ababa added a 75. Counting for Iloilo were Rene Menor's 72, Rey Sinfuego's 74 and Orlando Sequinto's 75.

Susarno assembed an even-par 70 and took a two-shot lead in the men's individual competition of the tournament the late business tycoon Robert Cheng launched in 1998.

Valley's Alvin Mijares, Ruben de la Rosa of Wack Wack and Puerto Azul's Jessie Alit came up with 72s to share second place with Menor and Glimada.

The 54-hole women's play fires off today.

PGAP fund-raiser today

MEMBERS of the Professional Golf Association of the Philippines play for a cause in an 18-hole fund-raiser today at the Villamor Golf Club.

Bantay Bata 163 ABS-CBN Foundation is the main beneficiary of the VIP Celebrity Pro-Am.

Major sponsors are Mizuno/Master Sports, Handog Marketing and IWSI. The other sponsors are Sen. Tito Sotto, Sen. Loren Legarda, Lt. Gen. Nestor Santillan, Jack Arroyo, Seibu Inc. of Fugio Fujii, Champion, Regent Travel Corp., Ricardo Bedayo, Izakaya Kenta, The Junior Golf League Inc., Cargohaus, USGTF, W-Eagle Pro Shop, Global Holiday, Red Bull, Pisanti and ALPHI.

The tilt is the first project of the new PGAP board headed by Sarge Negrido. Members are Vic Granada (vice president), Jun Cedo (secretary), Tony Arevalo (treasurer), Felix Fernando (auditor), Jun Bustamante (adviser) and lawyer Alex Avisado (deputy commissioner).

Long, Ellis return to San Mig, Ginebra

By Trina Ibarle

ART Long of San Miguel Beer and Rosell Ellis of Barangay Ginebra are the only familiar faces in the roster of imports in the PBA Fiesta Conference which kicks off this Sunday at the Araneta Coliseum.

The league yesterday released the list of imports who will suit up for nine of the 10 teams seeing action in the PBA's transition tournament.

Presented during the official measurement at the PBA Office were the 6-foot-7 Long, Mark Sanford of Coca-Cola, Lenny Cooke of Purefoods, Galen "Leslie" Young of Alaska, Lamayn Wilson of Sta. Lucia Realty, Alvin Jefferson of FedEx, Carlos Wheeler of Red Bull Barako, Marek Ondera of Shell and Randy Holcomb of Talk 'N Text.

Only Ellis of the Gin Kings, who will be arriving this Thursday, has yet to be measured.

Expected to provide the fireworks this conference is the 6-foot-6 Wilson, a Troy State University standout, who showed flashes of brilliance in the Realtors' frontline during a recent tuneup game.

Also fancied as a prized find is Sanford, a towering forward-center. The 6-foot-7 high-leaper was the second round pick of the Miami Heat in the 1997 NBA draft.

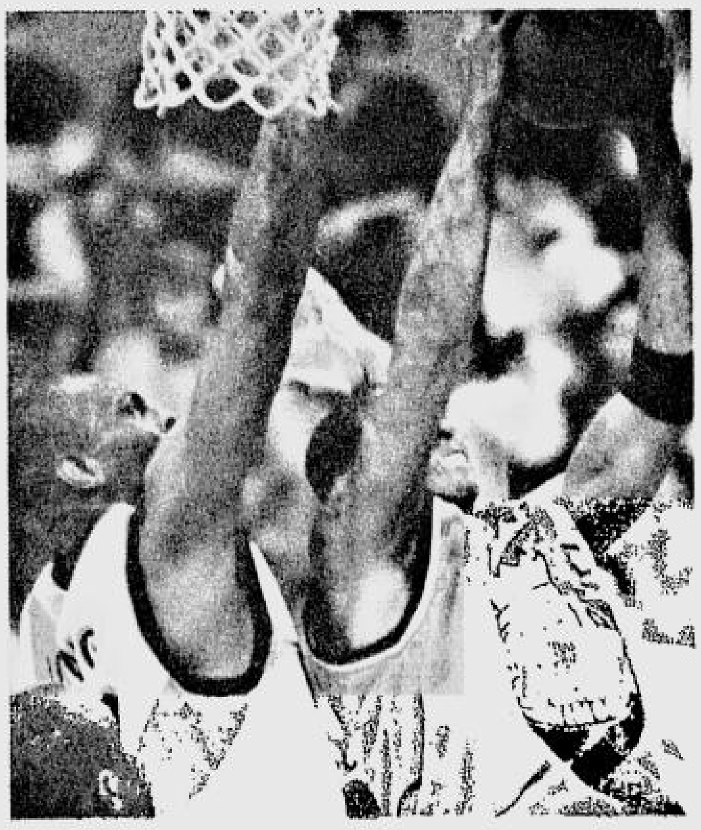
This season's tallest import, at 6-foot-8, is Jefferson, an Auburn University cager who formerly suited up for the Harlem Globetrotters. The shortest, at 6-4, is Young, a veteran of the the Continental Basketball Association.

The 6-foot-5 Cooke boasts a stint in the China Basketball Association where he reinforced the Shanghai Sharks, the former team of Houston Rockets slotman Yao Ming.

Wheeler, a speedy 6-6 defender, hails from Egypt and played for the Pensacola Junior College and later in the Israeli league.

The 6-foot-6 Holcomb played for San Diego State.

Ondera, a native of Denmark and the only white import this conference, stands 6-5 and played for the University of California-Irvine and the Danish Super League.



SAN Miguel Beer's Art Long (left) and Barangay Ginebra's Rosell Ellis will strut their stuff again in the Fiesta Conference. ROMY HOMILLADA

2 GMs blast Torre's Olympiad stand

By Trina Ibarle

IT SEEMS like the fighting is far from over.

Grandmasters Joey Antonio and Bong Villamayor yesterday criticized fellow GM Eugene Torre for his "inconsistent stand" regarding the proposal to give GMs automatic seedings to the country's squad in the Chess Olympiad.

The executive committee of the National Chess Federation of the Philippines (NCFP) has yet to set the final criteria to be used to select the members of the team to the annual championship slated in October in Majorca, Spain.

Torre earlier said he was willing to give up his automatic seeding to give way to other up-and-coming chess players to qualify to the team.

"*Parati niyang* (Torre) *gustong* ma-seed (Torre always wants to be seeded)," said Villamayor, mocking what he described was Torre's change of heart.

He said the NCFP was formed partly because Torre, Asia's first chess grandmaster, also had disapproved of the qualifying system set by the defunct Philippine Chess Federation, which refused to seed the GMs outright to the 2000 Olympiad team.

Antonio noted that Torre did not also join the qualifying tournaments for the 1999 Asian team championships "because he was not seeded."

Torre and NCFP secretary general Samuel Estimo drew the ire of Antonio and Villamayor last month after it was reported that the federation was supporting a proposed P1.5 million chess duel between Torre and International Master Mark Paragua, currently the country's No 1. player.

Torre said he agreed to compete in the qualifiers because the interest of local chess outweighs whatever personal gain he may get from his Olympiad stint.

"Personally, I would like to be seeded. But other players would feel that it is hard to have a chance to qualify if there is automatic seeding," he said.

Isn't giving the RP flag to the pawnbroker a crime?

BARE EYE

Recab Trinidad

BASKETBALL being a national passion, there came the charge that it was not only the national team which has been pawned.

There was this uneasy feeling that the Philippine flag itself has been dragged into the pawnshop.

As expected, the damaging shots thrown at the Basketball Association of the Philippines for its shocking move to stop the PBA from forming a full-pro selection to represent the country in major international tournaments came in a torrent.

The guy who got it smack in the chin was BAP secretary general Graham Lim.

Some of the shots, curses actually, could lead media censors to move in, the reason they would not be printed here.

People could not however understand how Lim, a subject of deportation proceedings, continues to defend the port and call the shots while his immediate superior, BAP president Tiny Literal, is nowhere in sight.

Lim is now singing a new tune, saying dumping the PBA was only his opinion.

Of course, nobody could specify how much that opinion cost. What happened is that Cebuena-Lhuillier, with the blessings of Lim, has proceeded on a nationwide talent search and tryouts, with an eye on forming future national squads.

***

The case is very sensitive and Rep. Monico Puentebella has assured Congress would have no choice but do its share if the POC and PSC failed to remedy the mess.

Actually, Puentebella explained, there's a rule banning sponsors branding in both the SEA Games and the Asiad.

He vowed to restore things in their proper perspective.

Still, the strongest move announced against the cheap BAP plan to dump the PBA program for international meets came from the Philippine Olympic Committee.

Sensing the urgency, POC president Celso Dayrit said they would be forced to step in to ensure the country gets the best possible representation in basketball in all Asian tournaments.

Dayrit said it's indeed the role of national sports associations, like the BAP, to have a program that will develop and produce the best athletes that could give honor to the country.

But the POC chief quickly added it's the paramount duty of these national associations to send the very best to represent the country.

***

The Lim-Lhuillier deal smacked of a sellout and the POC could again be charged of fence-sitting once it fails to act decisively.

Dayrit himself said it would be foolhardy, to say the least, for RP not to capitalize on the PBA which undoubtedly has the best players in the country.

If it feels the national team is being shortchanged, Dayrit said the POC could step in since "it has the final approving power on athletes competing in the Asiad and SEA Games."

He stressed that it's the POC which evaluates and approves Filipino athletes to major international events.

So will Dayrit, after sensing the dangers wrought by Lim, finally crack the whip?

The popular clamor is for the POC, with its vast powers, to stand up and fight for urgent reforms, mainly in the amateur basketball backyard.

***

Two-time Fiba president Lito Puyat said Lim's tie-up with Cebuana-Lhuillier "does not guarantee the formation of a team strong enough to "help us reclaim our Asian cage dominance."

"We need the PBA, we need the help of all basketball stakeholders in the country," Puyat told the Manila Daily Bulletin Monday.

He said Lim seems unaware of his responsibility as a top basketball official.

"He appears bent on destroying Philippine basketball," Puyat stressed.

For its part, Lhuillier said it's there mainly to help, and it will always stand to be counted.

Well, speaking of commitment, PBA Commissioner Noli Eala assured that it's always been there.

Unfortunately, he said, it's the BAP that has disapproved of their total commitment (*Sila naman ang umaayaw sa amin.*)

***

Similarly stunned by the BAP snub, PBA Chair Buddy Encarnado said the bigger commitment is to Philippine basketball and the general public.

"Can you imagine us having the best players and that they're not being made available for the national team. How can we be at peace with ourselves?" Encarnado asked.

Of course, Graham Lim could have been blinded by the grand possibilities that he overlooked the repercussions of his deal with his great sponsors.

I sincerely thought Lim, with his sensitive post, has learned to deal with people and groups like a true gentleman.

But the latest turn of events clearly showed he's still the shameless, shallow fixer of old.

"*Di pa kita na-ayos* Recah (Haven't fixed you yet) he coolly told me when our paths crossed during one Southeast Asian Games championship.

It felt like a slap, but I let him escape.

At least, Lim did not have the temerity to call me now to try and fix my views on the mess he has caused. He should thank himself for that.

(Most of the items and quotes in this column were culled from the reports of friends from other papers.)

SPORTSWATCH

Malaya's Cantor new PSA president

JIMMY Cantor of Malaya was elected president of the Philippine Sportswriters Association (PSA) during the general assembly of the country's oldest media organization yesterday at the Manila Pavilion. Cantor succeeded Bert Cuevas of the Manila Standard, who served two full terms since 2001. Cuevas is now an ex-officio member. Comprising the PSA board are Ding Marcelo of the Manila Bulletin, 1st vice president; Edwin Gabutina of Today, 2nd vice president; Aldrin Cardona of the Daily Tribune, secretary; Joe Antonio of People's Journal, treasurer; and Teddyvic Melendres of the Philippine Daily Inquirer, auditor. Lito Tacujan of The Philippine Star was named board chair while lifetime member Gus Villanueva is the board adviser. The board of directors are Recah Trinidad, Ernie Gonzales, Manolo Iñigo and Al Mendoza (Inquirer), Jimbo Gulle (Times), Rey Bancod (Tempo), Dennis Iñigo (Balita), Dina Marie Villena (Pilipino Star), Ana Federigan (Taliba), Ed Andaya (People's Tonight), Tito Deblois (Abante), Ronnie Nathanielsz (Standard), Joaquin Henson (Star), Camilo Mendez Jr. (Balita), and Enrique Gonzales (lifetime member). Gerry Ramos of the People's Journal was tasked to lead the search committee that will handle nominations for the PSA Awards Night.

33 early teams join Mendez Cup

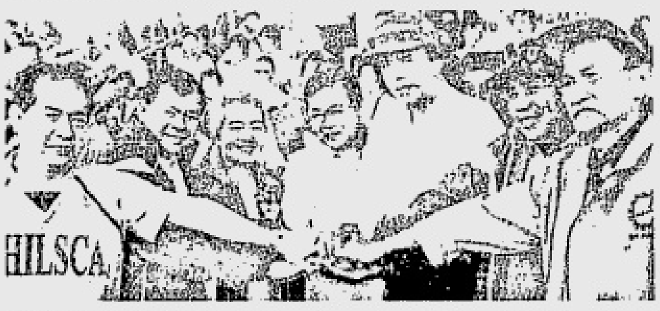
THIRTY-THREE teams have signed up for the first Mendez Cup tournament slated at the Sta. Elena Golf Club on March 1. Organizing committee chair Joe Magsaysay said the tournament format requires teams of two players each to play scramble in the front nine and alternate shots coming back. Monark Group of Companies' AutoMekanika and Club 650 are the tournament's major sponsors. The Foundation Values for Training Center Inc. is staging the tournament to raise funds for the construction of the Tagaytay Training Center in Mendez, Cavite.

Senior golf tees off tomorrow at Agui

MORE than 150 senior golfers and guests will tee off at Camp Aguinaldo golf course tomorrow to launch the first of a series of bi-monthly golf tournaments lined up this year under the auspices of the Federation of Philippine Senior Golfers Inc. Federation president Frisco F. San Juan said businessman-sportsman Hermie Esguerra, chair of the tournament's main sponsor Herma group of companies, will hit the ceremonial drive along with Rep. San Juan, Aguinaldo GC GM Gen. Roberto Santiago, and Aguinaldo seniors and organizing committee chair Joey Policarpio. Tee-off time is from 6:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. A Sky-Bo motorcycle is at stake as hole-in-one prize on Hole No. 6.

Meeting to benefit RP blind sports

THE INTERNATIONAL Blind Sports Federation (IBSA) meeting this week at the Hotel Intercontinental Manila "will benefit our visually impaired sportsmen." This was announced yesterday by PSC commissioner Michael Barredo, who guested at the PSA Forum sponsored by Red Bull, Agfa Color and Pagcor at the Manila Pavilion. According to Barredo, PSC head for Special Concerns and IBSA Asia chair, the 3-in-1 event "will give our countrymen the chance to gain financial assistance and technical knowledge." Fifty delegates from 20 countries have so far confirmed their participation in the IBSA Asia Oceania Strategic Planning Conference which starts on Feb. 19. The conference primarily aims to strengthen ties among blind sports organizations in the Asian and Oceania countries.



UNITY IN SPORTS: Sen. Robert Jaworski and Polytechnic University of the Philippines acting president Samuel M. Salvador (fourth from left) lead school presidents in a show of league unity during the opening ceremonies yesterday of the 16th State Colleges and Universities Athletics Association on the PUP campus. From left, Dr. Enrico Sampang of PhilSPCA, Dr. Nilo Rosas of PNU, Dr. Maura Bautista of EARIST, Dr. Salvador, Jaworski, Dr. Jose Macaballug of RTU and Dr. Fedeserio Camarao of TUP.

NCA 7-cocker final round at Big Dome

EXPECT more exciting action when the championship round of the National Cockers Association (NCA) 7-Cock Derby unfolds at 5 p.m. today at the Araneta Coliseum with more than 50 fights on tap. Fil-Am cockers Rene Medina and Ric de Guzman, Ruel Feliciano and Sons, topnotch breeder Boy Jiao of Rizal and Jun Mendoza are hosting today's fights. The St. Joseph Joke Joke Joke entry of Mayor Nene Aguilar, fresh off its victory in the NCA 7-Cock Derby second leg, posted three remarkable victories in last Monday's elimination round and will gun for another championship tonight. Mayor Nic Patenia's J and S 808 also posted three wins. The next derby at Big Dome is set March 1 and 3 with Jet and Joel Fernando, Jingco, Escalona and Madlambayan Brothers as hosts.

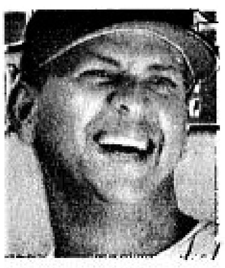
Special Las Piñas derby lures 35 entries

A CASH prize of P300,000 is up for grabs in a special 3-cock derby tonight sponsored by Sagupaan Complexor 3000 at the air-conditioned Las Piñas Coliseum. Derby host Arki Ronnie Dela Cruz has invited 35 participants in the cockfest where the entry fee is P6,600 and the minimum bet P5,500. All participants are reminded to submit their entries today, from 7 a.m. to 12 noon. For inquiries, call 873-1040 or 0920-5609404 and look for Julius. Also slated at the cockpit is the much-awaited 3-cock derby encounter of leading breeders from Cavite, Laguna, Batangas and Las Piñas on Feb. 25, with Esmer Ernaiz and Councilor Simon as hosts. Meanwhile, three entries emerged as co-champions in last week's "Handler's Cup 3-Cock Derby." These were Alexander (Alex Tobias), Bulaklak (Gerry Ramos) and Hindi Akin (engineer Wang Yu).

'TEE-UP FOR DOWNS 2' The Down Syndrome Association of the Philippines is holding its fund raising golf tournament tomorrow at Manila Southwoods. Tee time is from 6:30 to 8:30 a.m. Tickets are available at the DSAPI office, with tel. 895-9642 (Adette) 721-5286 (Portia).

RANGERS PAY $67M

A-Rod goes to NY Yankees



RODRIGUEZ AP

NEW YORK—Alex Rodriguez officially became a New York Yankee after major league commissioner Bud Selig approved the record-setting deal on Monday, allowing the reigning American League MVP to be traded by the Texas Rangers.

"I'm pretty excited. This is a big, big one," Yankees owner George Steinbrenner said.

"It ranks with when we signed Reggie," he said, a reference to when slugger Reggie Jackson joined the Yankees before the 1977 season.

Texas will pay $67 million of the $179 million left on Rodriguez's $252-million, 10-year contract, the most cash included in a trade in major league history. The Rangers get All-Star second baseman Alfonso Soriano and a player to be named—but they also will pay Rodriguez through 2025.

Rodriguez will move from shortstop, a position at which he's been a seven-time All-Star, to third base, where he will replace injured Aaron Boone. The Yankees will keep captain Derek Jeter at shortstop.

"Jeter is the captain. He is the leader," Steinbrenner said at the team's minor league complex in Tampa, Florida. *AP*

Shaq misses practice

EL SEGUNDO, California—A day after winning MVP honors in the NBA All-Star game, Lakers star Shaquille O'Neal was a no-show at practice.

Lakers coach Phil Jackson said O'Neal called to say he wasn't feeling well and wouldn't attend Monday's practice as the team prepared to play Portland on Tuesday night in its first game following the break.

O'Neal had 24 points and 11 rebounds as the Western Conference beat the East, 136-132, in Sunday night's All-Star game at Staples Center. He is expected to play against the Trail Blazers in the Lakers' first home game since Jan. 29.

Meanwhile, the NBA season resumes Tuesday (Wednesday in Manila), and no team has been playing better recently than the New Jersey Nets, winners of 10 straight—all by double-digit margins. *AP*

PBA players risk limbs, career in Sta. Maria games

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

THIS is a question begging for an answer: How come several Philippine Basketball Association stars risk their limbs and their PBA career by seeing action in an out-of-town tournament by playing at a cement court at Sta. Maria, Bulacan, without the permission of their respective teams?

According to those who have watched the well-attended games, the crowd-drawer who took part in this provincial sortie included veteran and young players of the PBA. They added that the recently ended elimination games was held nightly during Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, while the games of the ongoing championship series are being held weekly because of the onset of the PBA season which opens this Sunday at the Araneta Coliseum.

The Sta. Maria league features provincial teams, including those from the city of Malolos and the towns of Bocaue and Sta. Maria. Since the series went largely unnoticed, PBA officials, including team owners and coaches, were not privy to it.

I don't know about it," said a PBA coach yesterday, who wasted little time in saying with an emphatic, "No, I would not allow my players to play outside the league because they risk being hurt or, worse, permanently disabled. Besides, that is not allowed by our team."

***

CONGRATS, NEGROS DON BOSCO. Before a wildly cheering crowd, Negros Occidental's Don Bosco Institute of Technology won the 20th Coke Go-for-Goal under-16 football championship by posting a 2-0 shutout of Masbate Comprehensive National High School recently at the Sta. Barbara Plaza oval in Iloilo City.

It was the first national Go-for-Goal title for the Don Bosco booters and the third for Negros Occidental in the series organized by the Philippine Football Federation and sponsored by the Coca-Cola Export Corp. Never-say-die Van Map and Frederick James Mongcal scored the winning shots for Don Bosco while Jan Alwyn Espinosa, also of Negros Occidental, won the MVP award.

I salute Rene Adad, former PFF president and Philippine branch manager of the Coca-Cola Export Corp., and the people who worked behind the scene for a job well done.

RACING TIPS

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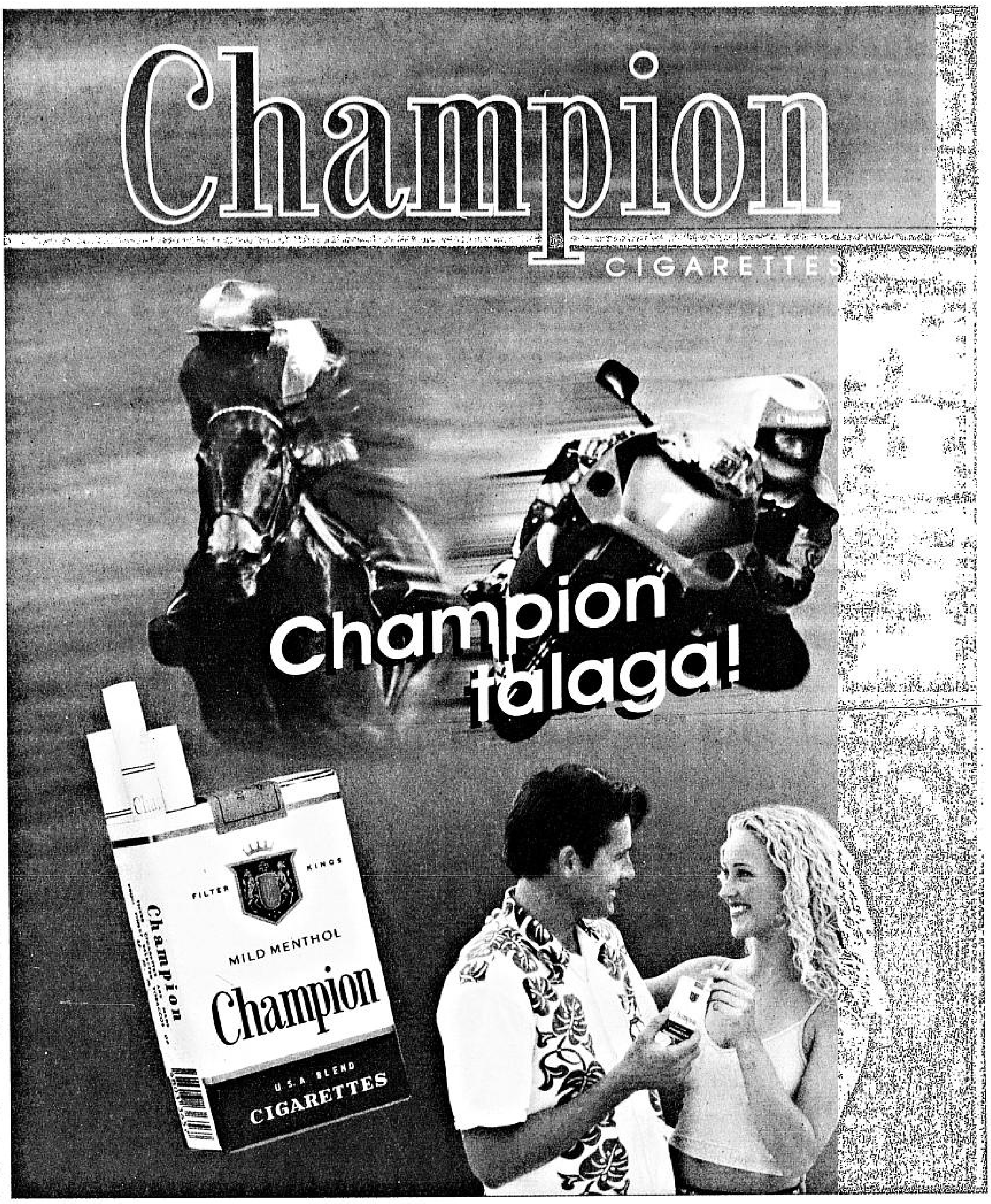
Race 2—1. War Alert 2. Hidden Dragon 3. Showtime Lady 4. D'Venetian 5. Masdan Mo/Gifted Gal
Race 3—1. Words of Joy 2. Skip Away 3. Western Dancer 4. Tenacity
Race 4—1. Parrot Moe 2. Suterian Era 3. Lance
Race 5—1. Alert One 2. Witch Craft 3. Cable Car 4. Candid 5. Icy Fingers
Race 6—1. Star Worth 2. Bold Lucky 3. Rumba
Race 7—1. Black Gold 2. Stormy Alydar 3. Daytona 4. Worth Ur While 5. Whistle Blower
Race 8—1. Jackpot 2. Portal Dancer 3. Rock's Dragon 4. Mr. Alien 5. Great Hill
Race 9—1. Kiss Me Quick 2. Hummingbird 3. American Beauty 4. Colonial Affair 5. Ivisan Queen 6. Samahan



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DID YOU KNOW...

Movie producer Lily Monteverde hopped into a cab with some reporters to watch the "Starstruck" finals two Sundays ago at the Araneta Coliseum. But when they reached the venue, the flamboyant Regal Films matriarch found out that she did not have her wallet. She had to let the movie reporters pay for the taxi fare.

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2003 Los Angeles Film Critics Association

WINNER
BEST ACTRESS
2003 Chicago Movie Critics

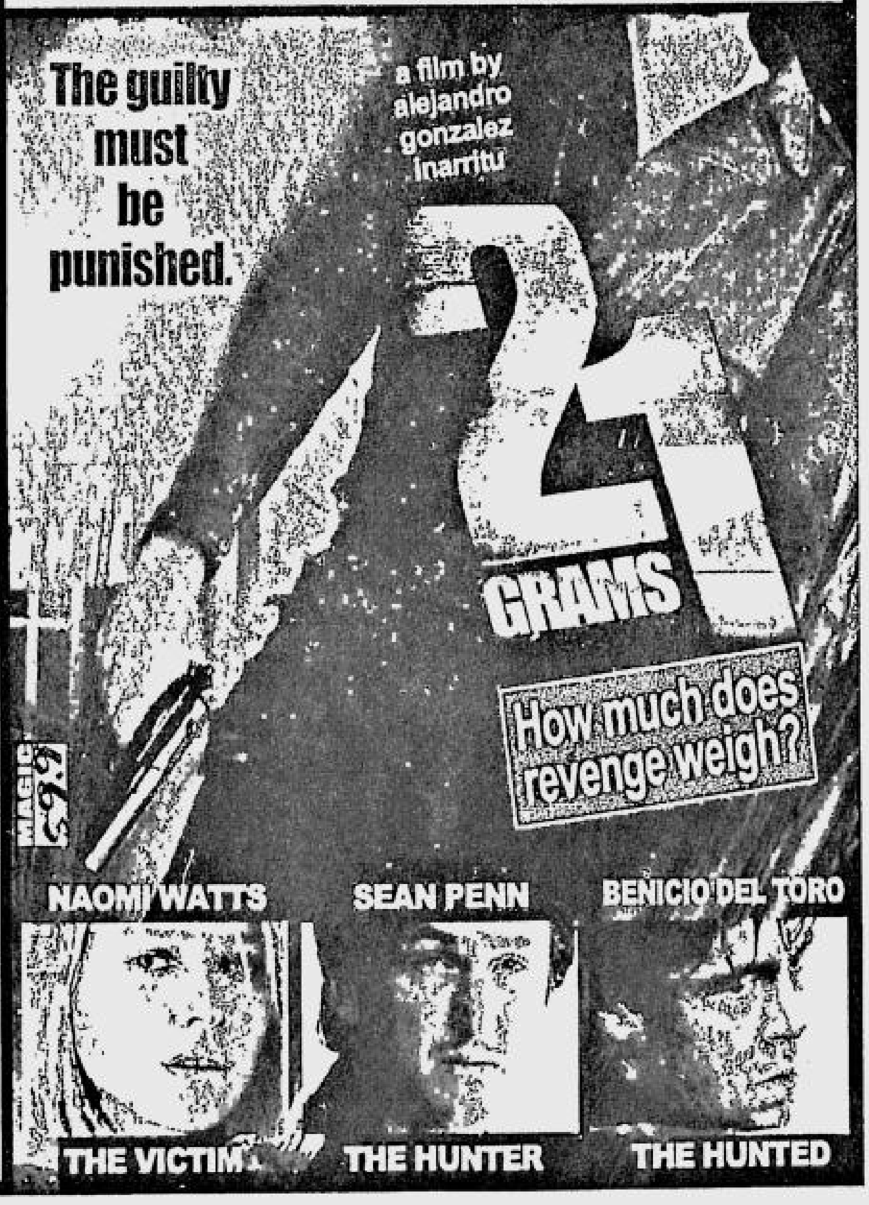
WINNER
BEST ACTRESS
2003 San Diego Film Critics

WINNER
BEST ACTRESS
2003 Southeastern Film Critics

WINNER
BEST PICTURE
2003 NY Online Film Critics

WINNER
BEST ACTRESS
2003 Florida Film Critics

WINNER
BEST ACTOR
BEST ACTRESS
2003 Washington DC Film Critics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6	HAUNTED MANSION	SDDS
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8	CHASING LIBERTY	DOLBY
9	KUYA	DOLBY
10	MYSTIC RIVER/MASTER AND COMMANDER	

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3	KUYA	DOLBY
4	WISHING STAIRS	DOLBY
5	RUNAWAY JURY	DOLBY
6	HAUNTED MANSION	SDDS
7	CHASING LIBERTY	DTS

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3	KUYA	DOLBY
4	CHASING LIBERTY	DOLBY DIGITAL
5	RUNAWAY JURY	DOLBY DIGITAL
6	MASTER AND COMMANDER/ MYSTIC RIVER	DOLBY
7	MILAN	DTS
8	WISHING STAIRS	

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2	CHASING LIBERTY	DOLBY
3	KUYA	DOLBY
4	COLD MOUNTAIN	DOLBY
5	MILAN	
6	RUNAWAY JURY	DOLBY
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3	KUYA
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2	MILAN
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2	MILAN
3	CHASING LIBERTY
4	TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE
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2	COLD MOUNTAIN
3	MILAN
4	KUYA
5	WISHING STAIRS
6	HAUNTED MANSION

IMUS

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Cinema	Movie
1	HAUNTED MANSION
2	CHASING LIBERTY
3	KUYA
4 DTS	COLD MOUNTAIN
5	MILAN
6	WISHING STAIRS

BACOLOD

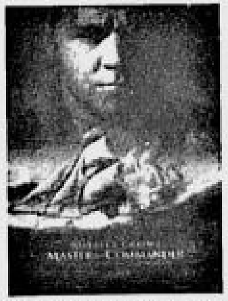
441-0458/59

Cinema	Movie
1	MONA LISA SMILE
2	MILAN
3	UNDER THE TUSCAN SUN
4	HAUNTED OFFICE
5	A TALE OF TWO SISTERS
6	DIABLO

ILOILO

336-8070/78

Cinema	Movie
1	MONA LISA SMILE
2	KUYA
3	MILAN
4	A TALE OF TWO SISTERS
5	DIABLO
6	THE GATHERING



MYSTIC RIVER

NOW SHOWING at Robinsons Movieworld Cinemas

ADVANCE SCREENING

* GHOST HOUSE *
February 18, 2004
(WEDNESDAY)

* SOMETHING'S GOTTA GIVE *
February 19, 2004
(THURSDAY)

Robinsons Movieworld GALLERIA Cinema 6 (7:30 PM)
This screening is STRICTLY INVITATIONAL

MOVIES/SCHEDULES/PRICES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.

DID YOU KNOW...

Movie producer Lily Monteverde hopped into a cab with some reporters to watch the "Starstruck" finals two Sundays ago at the Araneta Coliseum. But when they reached the venue, the flamboyant Regal Films matriarch found out that she did not have her wallet. She had to let the movie reporters pay for the taxi fare.

NOW SHOWING at Robinsons Movieworld

FEBRUARY 18

For screening time and movie inquiries, pls. call our MOVIE ACCESS no: 635-5555 or visit us: www.robinsonsmovieworld.com

MOVIEWORLD

mtrcb rating: R-13

John CUSACK
Gene HACKMAN
Dustin HOFFMAN
Rachel WEISZ
RUNAWAY JURY

EPIC ROMANCE, SIZZLING PASSION YOU SHOULDN'T MISS !

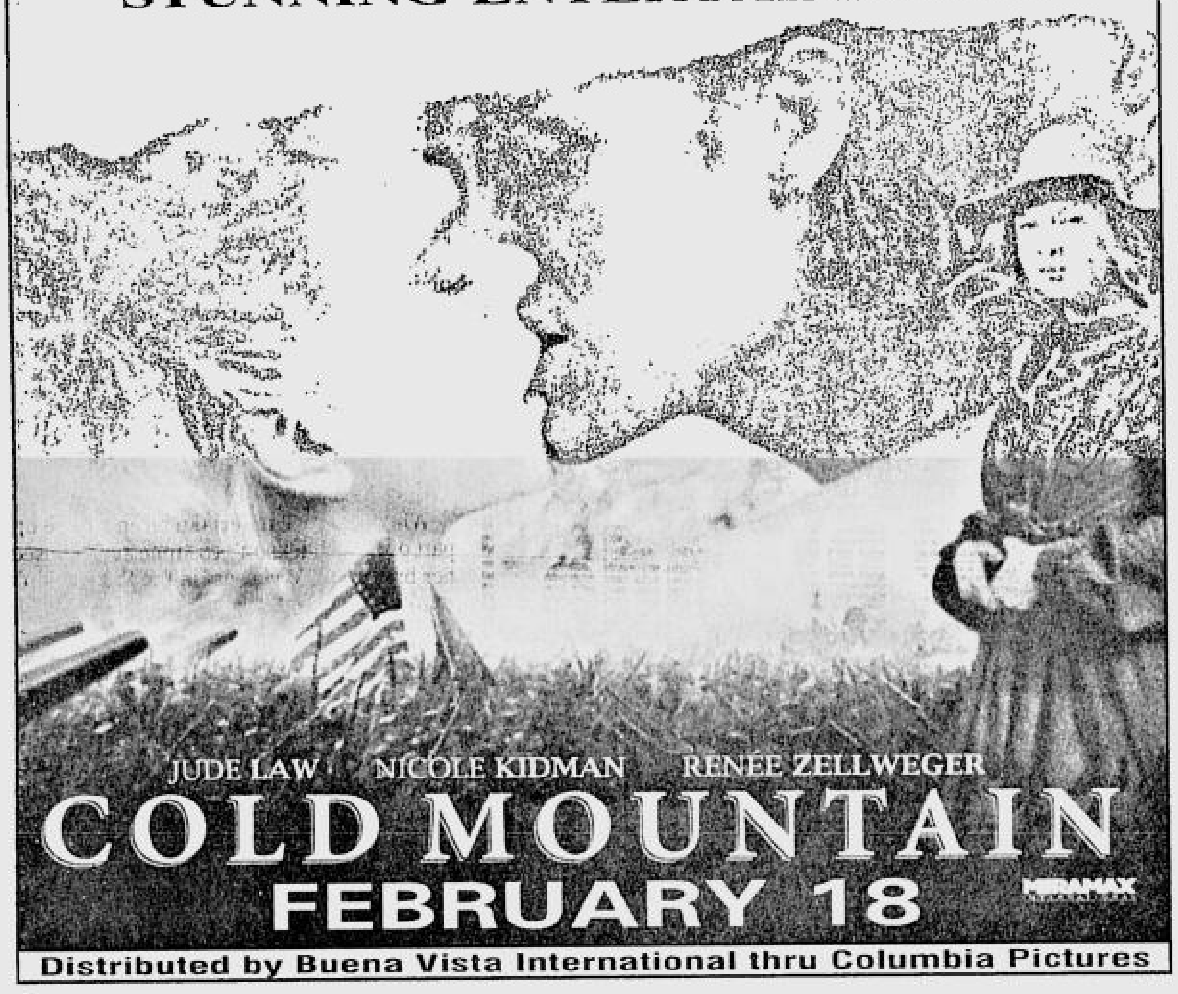
OPENS TODAY !

MTRCB RATING ▶R-18 | Strictly For Adults Only. No one below 18 years old may be admitted.

7 ACADEMY AWARD NOMINATIONS

13 BRITISH ACADEMY FILM AWARD NOMINATIONS INCLUDING BEST PICTURE OF THE YEAR

And the film David Denby of The New Yorker calls "STUNNING ENTERTAINMENT!"



JUDE LAW NICOLE KIDMAN RENÉE ZELLWEGER

COLD MOUNTAIN

FEBRUARY 18

MIRAMAX

Distributed by Buena Vista International thru Columbia Pictures

OPENS TODAY !

THE MOST TALKED-ABOUT MOVIE OF THE YEAR

ACADEMY AWARD® NOMINATIONS

BEST ACTOR BENICIO DEL TORO
BEST ACTRESS NAOMI WATTS

WINNER
BEST ACTOR
2003 Venice International Film Festival

WINNER
BEST FILM OF THE YEAR
BEST ACTOR
2003 National Board of Review

WINNER
BEST ACTRESS
2003 Online Film Critics Society

WINNER
BEST ACTRESS
2003 Los Angeles Film Critics Association

WINNER
BEST ACTRESS
2003 Chicago Movie Critics

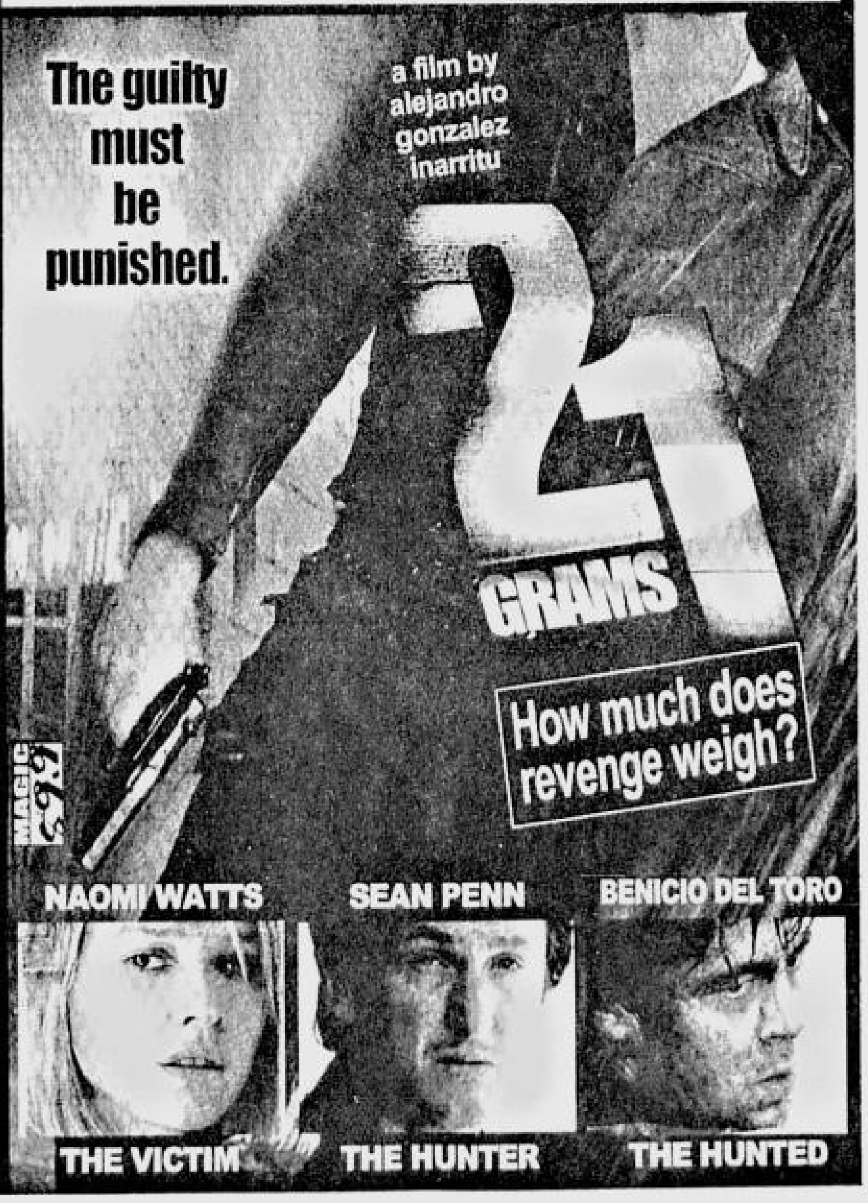
WINNER
BEST ACTRESS
2003 San Diego Film Critics

WINNER
BEST ACTRESS
2003 Southeastern Film Critics

WINNER
BEST PICTURE
2003 NY Online Film Critics

WINNER
BEST ACTRESS
2003 Florida Film Critics

WINNER
BEST ACTOR
BEST ACTRESS
2003 Washington DC Film Critics


The guilty must be punished.
a film by alejandro gonzalez inarritu
21 GRAMS
How much does revenge weigh?
MAGIC 89.9
NAOMI WATTS
SEAN PENN
BENICIO DEL TORO
THE VICTIM
THE HUNTER
THE HUNTED

ROBINSONS MOVIEWORLD

CALL-A-MOVIE FOR ALL BRANCHES 635-5555
Visit us: www.robinsonsmovieworld.com

TOP MOVIE THEATER

Annual National Consumer's Quality Award 2003

Family Consumers Choice Award 2003

NOW SHOWING

GALLERIA

632-9115 to 16 / 687-0593

CINEMA 1 THX	RUNAWAY JURY	
2	MILAN	DOLBY DIGITAL
3	21 GRAMS	DTS
4	TOTALLY BLONDE	
5	COLD MOUNTAIN	DOLBY DIGITAL
6	HAUNTED MANSION	SDDS
7	BONE SNATCHER	
8	CHASING LIBERTY	DOLBY
9	KUYA	DOLBY
10	MYSTIC RIVER/MASTER AND COMMANDER	

MATINEE: Monday to Friday/ 10 am-4pm except holidays
Matinee Price: P100 THX cinema / P80 for one level cinemas
Regular Price: P130 THX / P95/65 for two levels cinemas / P95 for one level cinemas

ERMITA

526-7185 / 536-7809 to 12

1	COLD MOUNTAIN	DOLBY DIGITAL
2	MILAN	DOLBY
3	KUYA	DOLBY
4	WISHING STAIRS	
5	RUNAWAY JURY	DOLBY
6	HAUNTED MANSION	SDDS
7	CHASING LIBERTY	DTS

Big R Supercenter METRO EAST

682-8193/99 / 682-8280

1	HAUNTED MANSION	DOLBY
2	COLD MOUNTAIN	SDDS
3	KUYA	DOLBY
4	CHASING LIBERTY	
5	RUNAWAY JURY	
6	MASTER AND COMMANDER/ MYSTIC RIVER	DOLBY
7	MILAN	DTS
8	WISHING STAIRS	

Big R Supercenter NOVALICHES / FAIRVIEW

935-3229 / 31

1	HAUNTED MANSION	DOLBY DIGITAL
2	CHASING LIBERTY	
3	KUYA	DOLBY
4	COLD MOUNTAIN	
5	MILAN	
6	RUNAWAY JURY	DOLBY
7	WISHING STAIRS	
8	MASTER COMMANDER / MYSTIC RIVER	

Citisquare MALABON

288-0985/2575

1	HAUNTED MANSION
2	MILAN
3	KUYA
4	COLD MOUNTAIN

big Supercenter CAINTA

240-4661

1	COLD MOUNTAIN
2	MILAN
3	HAUNTED MANSION
4	KUYA

Big R Supercenter STA. ROSA

Laguna (049)837-0907

1	MILAN
2	COLD MOUNTAIN
3	WISHING STAIRS
4	TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE
5	KUYA

Big R Supercenter LIPA

757-3664 / 312-5870

1	CHASING LIBERTY
2	HAUNTED OFFICE
3	THE TWINS EFFECT
4	MONA LISA SMILE
5	MILAN

Big R Supercenter DASMARIÑAS

852-2125

1	KUYA
2	MILAN
3	CHASING LIBERTY
4	TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE
5	THE HAUNTED MANSION

Big R Supercenter STARMILLS

875-1927 / 961-5270

1	A TALE OF TWO SISTERS
2	COLD MOUNTAIN
3	MILAN
4	KUYA
5	WISHING STAIRS
6	HAUNTED MANSION

IMUS

471-8188 / 875-5858

1	HAUNTED MANSION
2	CHASING LIBERTY
3	KUYA
4	COLD MOUNTAIN
5	MILAN
6	WISHING STAIRS

BACOLOD

441-0458/59

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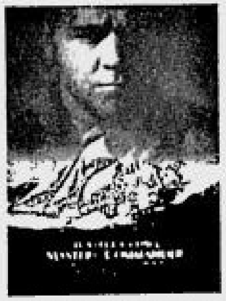

MYSTIC RIVER

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BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Current trend of songs with suggestive lyrics 'invade' radio, television shows

SOME years ago, songs with suggestive lyrics used to be quite the rage, but they were generally kept away from radio and TV, so their negative effect on minors' sensibilities was minimal.

These days, however, some smarmy songs and rap numbers are being played on the radio and sung on TV, so the trend has become worrisome and reprehensible.

On the radio some days back, we heard a song about a man's sex organ. The lyrics were couched in double talk, but their leering meaning was clear.

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

To make things worse, the DJ of the program in which the song was played chortled naughtily about the cut's lyrics, adding insult to injury.

And, last weekend on a TV noontime program, a rap number with broadly suggestive lyrics pertaining to the sex act was performed by a number of so-called singing stars, who grinned like frisky adolescents throughout their "performance."

Other perceived infractions: a song about the female sex organ, and a dance "inspired" by sexy copulative movements.

What's going on? Why do performers, station executives, and program directors, producers and hosts, allow themselves to be involved in this smarmy trend?

In the past, they would have kept these leering songs out of radio and TV, but performing and programming standards have gone down, so watchdog groups have to step in and remind entertainers and broadcast people of their responsibilities.

Listeners and viewers also have to complain—if not for their sake, then for their children's. One reason why people try to get away with murder on the local performing scene is the fact that the audience lets them.

Compare our couldn't-care-less attitude to that obtaining in other countries, and you'll get a clearer idea of how clueless and passive we are:

When **Justin Timberlake** recently tore off part of **Janet Jackson**'s costume and exposed her breast on TV, viewers in the States didn't think it was funny. More than 200,000 of them complained to the Federal Communications Commission, which is coming up with sanctions to make sure it doesn't happen again.

On local TV sometime ago, a similar instance of "accidental" exposure took place, but only a few viewers complained; and no sanctions were imposed.

That's the big difference: in the States, 200,000 people cry foul, and the authorities act; here, viewers think infractions are no big deal, so they continue to be made, and with impunity.

It's clear, therefore, that when entertainers exceed their limits, and stations aid and abet their irresponsibility, viewers (not 10, 50 or 100, but tens of thousands of them) have to speak up, and make their disappointment and disgust known.

So, the next time you hear a leering, smarmy song on radio or on TV, assert your right to decent entertainment, and *complain!*

Lottery prize

LAST Tuesday, the unique exhibit, "101 Most Beautiful Necklaces," opened at the Greenbelt 3 lobby at Ayala Center. The exhibit-sale is Desideria and the Tantoco-Rustia Foundation's benefit fund-raiser for the Philippine-Italian Association's Endowment Fund.

Every P5,000 purchase of a featured Italian necklace entitles a customer to a lottery ticket. The draw will be held on the last day of the exhibit, Feb. 24, at 5 p.m.. at the Greenbelt 3 lobby. The grand lottery prize is the Queen of Venice necklace.

Text poetry tilt

THE NCCA, Filipinas Institute of Translation, Unyon ng mga Manunulat sa Pilipinas and the UP Institute of Creative Writing have launched DIONATEXT, a text (SMS) poetry writing contest.

The tilt aims to revitalize the art of poetry writing by using modern technology. The diona is a short poem composed of three verified rhyming lines. Each line consists only of seven syllables expressing a complete thought.

DIONATEXT entries should be written in Filipino and should express love within the family. Example: *Magkapatid mang buo, kundi kapuwa suyo, parang pinsang malayo.*

Contestants should submit their entries through text to (0927)-4641814 or (0918)-2252718, with author's name and address. Entries must be received not later than 5 p.m. every Friday of each contest week.

Every week this month, judges will pick two winners who will receive P5,000 each. Eight consolation prizes of P2,000 each will also be awarded.

The winning entries will be compiled into a book which will be released at the awarding ceremonies. For more details, call Badong at 922-1830.

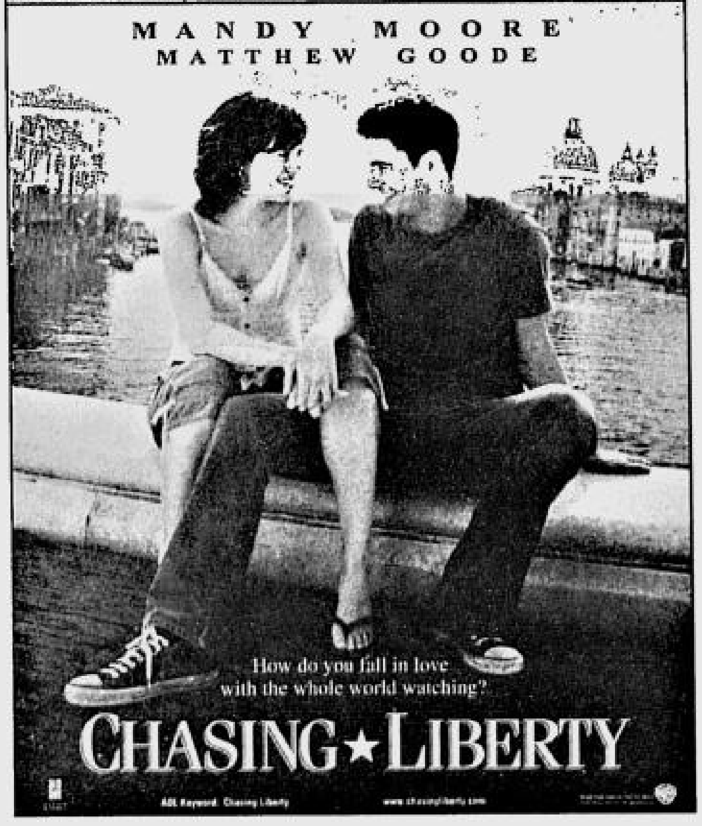
MTRCB RATING ▶ PG-13 Children below 13 yrs. old will be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult.
GRAND OPENING TODAY!
Meet and Greet the whole Kuya casts TODAY at SM Cinema lobbies: 11 am SM North; 2pm SM Centerpoint; 3pm SM Manila; 4pm SM Megamall
Tunay na Pag-ibig... Tunay na Pagkakaibigan... Samahang Walang Iwanan... Minsan Lang 'To... Puwedeng Panghabambuhay...

AUBREY MILES
MAXENE MAGALONA
CHYNNA ORTALEZA
ANGEL LOCSIN
COGIE DOMINGO
DANILO BARRIOS
JAMES BLANCO
OYO BOY SOTTO
RAILEY VALEROSO
and RICHARD GUTIERREZ
kuya
a film by: DOMINIC ZAPATA
A REGAL ENTERTAINMENT INC. PRESENTATION
www.regalfilms.com
THIS MOVIE IS ABOUT TROUBLED YOUTH, SOME SCENES MAY BE OFFENSIVE TO OR NOT SUITABLE FOR YOUNG VIEWERS.

SPOOKY FUN ADVENTURE
SECOND WEEK!
MTRCB RATING ▶ G General Patronage | ALL AGES ADMITTED

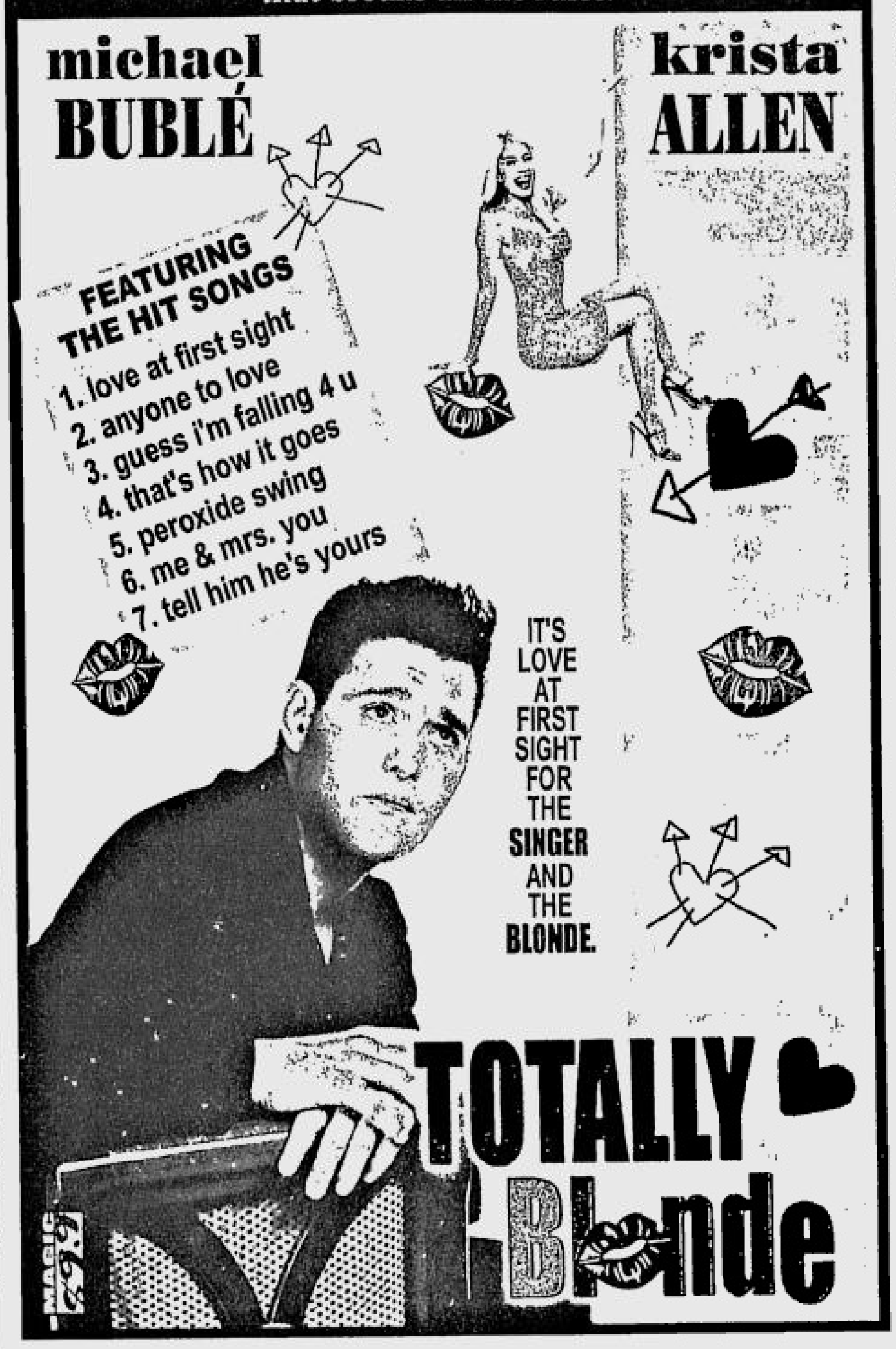
EDDIE MURPHY
THE CLAIRVOYANT
WALT DISNEY PICTURES PRESENTS
the Haunted Mansion
YOUR FUTURE WOULD BE IN GOOD HANDS... IF SHE HAD ANY
Walt Disney Pictures
Distributed by Buena Vista International thru Columbia Pictures

NOW SHOWING
MTRCB RATING PG-13 | Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult



MANDY MOORE
MATTHEW GOODE
How do you fall in love with the whole world watching?
CHASING★LIBERTY
AOL Keyword: Chasing Liberty

OPENS TODAY!
MTRCB RATING ▶ R-13 | STRICTLY FOR 13 YEARS OF AGE AND UP.
Krista Allen, listed by Stuff, Maxim and FHM magazines as one of the world's most beautiful women together with Canadian Crooner *Michael Buble* in a *sex comedy that breaks all the rules.*



michael BUBLÉ
krista ALLEN
FEATURING THE HIT SONGS
1. love at first sight
2. anyone to love
3. guess i'm falling 4 u
4. that's how it goes
5. peroxide swing
6. me & mrs. you
7. tell him he's yours
IT'S LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT FOR THE SINGER AND THE BLONDE.
TOTALLY Blonde
MAGIC

AYALA CINEMAS
OPENS TODAY EXCLUSIVELY AT
Greenbelt ArtFilm
A NEW HOME. A NEW LIFE
SEEN THROUGH EYES THAT SEE EVERYTHING

IN AMERICA

From master storyteller Jim Sheridan ("My Left Foot," "In The Name of the Father") comes a deeply personal and emotionally raw tale of a family finding its soul *IN AMERICA*. Through the wide-open eyes of two young heroines, Sheridan transforms a devastating human tragedy into a riveting, humor-tinged story about memory, secrets, love, loss, coming together and starting over .

3 ACADEMY AWARD NOMINATIONS
BEST ACTRESS
Samantha Morton
BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR
Djimon Hounsou
BEST SCREENPLAY
Jim Sheridan, Naomi Sheridan & Kirsten Sheridan

COFFEE CLUB DISCUSSION
on "IN AMERICA" TODAY (Feb. 18) at 7pm.
Admission Price: P100
For inquiries, contact 752-7865 .

MTRCB Rating: Restricted 13 (R-13)
NOKIA
FOX
INQUIRER

Jason Mraz at the Aliw Theater

ACOUSTIC artist Jason Mraz will perform on Saturday at the the Aliw Theater, CCP Complex.

Mraz is perhaps the only legitimate contemporary artist to visit Manila this season. His songs include "Sleep All Day," "You and I Both," "No Stopping Us," "The Remedy" and "Curbside Prophet" all in his latest album, "Waiting for My Rocket to Come."

Before his Aliw performance, Mraz will have a special acoustic session entitled "Proximity" on Friday at the Dish at Rockwell Power Plant in Makati City.

Local acoustic sensation Paolo Santos will guest in both shows.

Araneta Center ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

ALI MALL CINEPLEX 7

Ali 1	MILAN
Ali 2	KUYA
Ali 3	RUNAWAY JURY
Ali 4	COLD MOUNTAIN
Ali 5	HAUNTED MANSION
Ali 6	MYSTIC RIVER
Ali 7	CHASING LIBERTY

NEW FIESTA CARNIVAL

NOW OPEN 4 PM to 10 PM daily

ARANETA COLISEUM

FEB 18	NCA 7-COCK DERBY
FEB 22	PBA FIESTA CONFERENCE OPENING
FEB 25	PBA: RED BULL VS. TALK N' TEXT
FEB 29	PBA: TALK N' TEXT VS. SHELL
MAR 1	NCA 7-COCK DERBY
MAR 3	NCA 7-COCK DERBY
MAR 6	BB. PILIPINAS CORONATION NIGHT

FOR TICKETS, CALL TICKETNET AT 911-5555

THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	SEX BOMB / RAMPADORA
ODEON	X-MEN 2
ODEON-2	BUKID AY BASA / KASIBULAN
ROBEN	BOLD STAR
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	SPY / LEGEND OF CROCODILE
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	FRIDA / BAHID
CORONET B	A MAN APART
QUEZON-1	BERTUD NG PUTIK
REMAR	X-MEN 2
REMAR-2	BOLD STAR
NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA	
A	MILAN
B	BURLESK KING
C	
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CINEMA-2	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	MILAN
CINEMA-2	LAST SAMURAI
CINEMA-3	WISHING STAIRS
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	MASTER AND COMMANDER (RI)
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	BROTHER BEAR
CINEMA-6	TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE
CINEMA-7	MYSTIC RIVER (RI)
CINEMA-8	MAGIC KITCHEN
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	RUNAWAY JURY
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	HAUNTED MANSION
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	COLD MOUNTAIN
CINEMA-12	CHASING LIBERTY
CINEMA-14	KUYA
CINEMA-15	MILAN
LORES	
CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN	
(LAS PINAS)	MILAN
CINEMA-1	MONA LISA SMILE
CINEMA-2	CLOSED
CINEMA-4	CLOSED
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARANAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
CINEMA-4	SELDA

POWER PLANT CINEMA

Rockwell Center, Makati City ☎ Tel. No: 8981440-41

DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

TOTALLY BLONDE R13 12:45, 2:55, 5:05, 7:15, 9:30	**COLD MOUNTAIN** R18 12:55, 4:00, 7:05, 10:10	**MILAN** PG13 11:50, 2:15, 4:50, 7:25, 10:00
CHASING LIBERTY PG13 12:00, 2:30, 5:00, 7:30, 10:00	**HAUNTED MANSION** GP 1:00, 3:00, 5:00, 7:00, 9:00	**RUNAWAY JURY** R13 12:00, 2:35, 5:10, 7:45, 10:20

MATINEE P80.00 - FREE SEATING - SCREENINGS BEFORE 5 PM - MON. TO FRI.

AYALA CINEMAS

OPENS TODAY EXCLUSIVELY AT AYALA CENTER CEBU CINEMAS

AYALA CENTER CEBU

CALENDAR GIRLS

CALENDAR GIRLS

SOME LADIES WILL DO ANYTHING FOR A GOOD CAUSE

Inspired by a true story, Calendar Girls sees a group of Yorkshire matrons posing naked for a calendar to raise money for a medical-research charity after the husband of one of the women is diagnosed with leukemia. This calendar in fact became a worldwide sensation, out-selling even those of Britney Spears and Cindy Crawford.

"Calendar Girls is the Full Monty - female style!"
— Clay Smith, ACCESS HOLLYWOOD

"The most heartwarming film of the year"
— Paul Clinton, CNN

Buena Vista International

MTRCB Rating: Parental Guidance 13

CITY OF MAKATI
Globe
present
FAME
The Musical
REP'S GLOBE THEATRE

ROBINSONS MOVIEWORLD

GHOST HOUSE

ADVANCE SCREENING
at
Robinsons Movieworld
GALLERIA Cinema 6

FEBRUARY 18
(Wednesday) 7:30 PM

this ADSTRAT Screening is STRICTLY invitational

MTRCB Rating: PG-13
Opens on FEBRUARY 25

The Best Horror Film from India!
Winner of 3 Major Screen Awards:
Best Actress, Best Background Music, Best Sound
Don't watch alone!
GHOST HOUSE

EASTWOOD CINEMAS

Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City
E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave. (C-5) Quezon City

DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

For inquiries, call:
687-6963 • 687-6972

RESERVED SEATING

MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

1	MILAN	11:45, 2:15, 4:45, 7:15, 9:45	PG-13
2	COLD MOUNTAIN	11:00, 2:00, 5:00, 8:00, 11:00	R-18
3	RUNAWAY JURY	11:30, 2:20, 5:10, 8:00, 10:50	R-13
4	KUYA	12:15, 2:45, 5:05, 7:25, 9:45	PG-13

THEATRE MALL

GREENHILLS

a landmark reinvented!

DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

NOW SHOWING

CINEMA 1	RUNAWAY JURY	12:00, 3:00, 6:00, 9:00	R13
CINEMA 2	COLD MOUNTAIN	12:05, 3:20, 6:30, 9:40	R18

TICKET PRICES & SCREENING TIME SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.
GREENHILLS SHOPPING CENTER, ORTIGAS AVENUE, GREENHILLS, SAN JUAN, METRO MANILA • 7224496

MUSIC MUSEUM | FEB. 26-28 | "ELECTILE DYSFUNCTION" | 8:00PM

FOR INQUIRIES & RESERVATION, PLS. CALL: 721-6726 OR 721-0635

OPENS FEBRUARY 25!

MTRCB RATING R-13 | STRICTLY FOR 13 YEARS OF AGE AND ABOVE

JACK NICHOLSON   DIANE KEATON   KEANU REEVES

A FILM BY NANCY MEYERS

SOMETHING'S GOTTA GIVE

WARNER BROS. PICTURES AND COLUMBIA PICTURES PRESENT

COLUMBIA PICTURES

THE MOVIE YOU ALMOST FAILED TO SEE ON THE BIG SCREEN...

MTRCB RATING ► R-13 | Strictly for thirteen years of age and up.

John CUSACK
Gene HACKMAN
Dustin HOFFMAN
Rachel WEISZ
Truth.
Silence.
Murder.
Money Buys
Everthing.
RUNAWAY JURY

From master storyteller John Grisham ("The Firm", "The Pelican Brief") comes RUNAWAY JURY, a suspenseful thriller about a high-priced and ruthless jury "consultant" (Gene Hackman) who will stop at nothing to secure a verdict on an explosive trial. With lives and millions of dollars at stake, the fixer wages a deadly battle with a jury member (John Cusack), a mysterious woman (Rachel Weisz) and an honest lawyer (Dustin Hoffman).

Runaway Jury marks the first pairing of Hollywood legends GENE HACKMAN and DUSTIN HOFFMAN.

Don't miss this once in a lifetime event on screen.

GRAND OPENING TODAY

MTRCB RATING ▸ PG-13

"DESERT TERROR" EXPLODES TODAY!

SAGAD SA BUTO... MABABALATAN KA SA TAKOT!

THE BONE SNATCHER
Bolex FILMS INC.

Former 'That's' host now a lifestyle guru

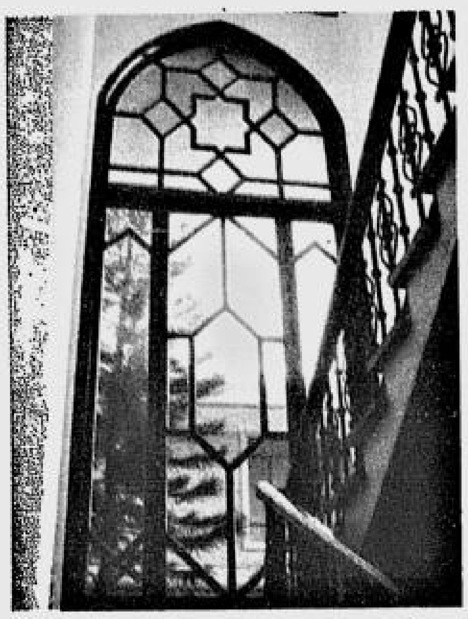
WHEN Ana Margarita Gonzalez married Josemari Cuervo, she turned her back on show biz, bore her husband two children (Enrique, 3, and Beatriz, 1) and re-emerged in the public's consciousness as a home and furniture designer.

The younger sister of actress Cristina Gonzalez (now Mrs. Alfred Romualdez) is now married to Josemari Cuervo of Cuervo Far East.

She now heads Casa Toscana, a company that designs and builds houses, and The Barnyard, located at Festival Mall, Alabang, known for its Mediterranean-inspired and rustic furniture and home accents. Ana is also the image model of The Banyard, and her lifestyle has made her perfect for the part.

HIGH ceilings, airy windows, bright walls for a feel of wider spaces. All these make Ana's designs a combination of style and function.

ANA Gonzalez-Cuervo was teenage actress turned designing woman.


LIGHT floods this airy stairway, seemingly transforming it into a gateway to heaven.

A commercial model at 14, Ana became an endorser of several products and had her time as the most sought-after magazine cover girl.

Three years later, Ana joined German Moreno's "GMA Supershow" and later on "That's Entertainment" as co-host. As an actress, she did several movies for Regal Films and Seiko Films, becoming the leading lady of teenage actors in comedy and action flicks.

SHOW STOPPER

But she left show biz a few years later to pursue her passion for art and design, her first love. For four years, Ana lived in England and studied at the American College of London where she graduated with an Associate in Arts degree major in Interior Design. The course was mainly concentrated on interior architecture, making Ana's forte space planning.

ANA as her own image model: Classic beauty for classical designs

Old-world charm

She also studied painting at the Ayala Museum, and now paints with oil, acrylic and watercolors as her media.

It was during her stay in Europe that she fell in love with its old-world charm, especially the rustic Mediterranean homes and furniture, says Ana. A design genre that is inspired by relaxed living, simplicity and openness, it is characterized by earth colors such as green, terracotta and amber; natural wood; wrought iron accents and distressed finishes. These elements are reflected on her designs.

"As a furniture and residential designer, I prefer character in a house or piece of furniture. I love those little imperfections like the grains, the dents, the natural look which all give a unique feel," says Ana.

Her furniture feature tile inlays on tables and wrought iron accents on chests, details that are trademarks of Ana Cuervo designs. Her pieces are not only beautiful but functional. For example, a wrought iron trundle bed is perfect for condominium living because it is both a sofa and a bed with a pullout underneath.

New sense of worth

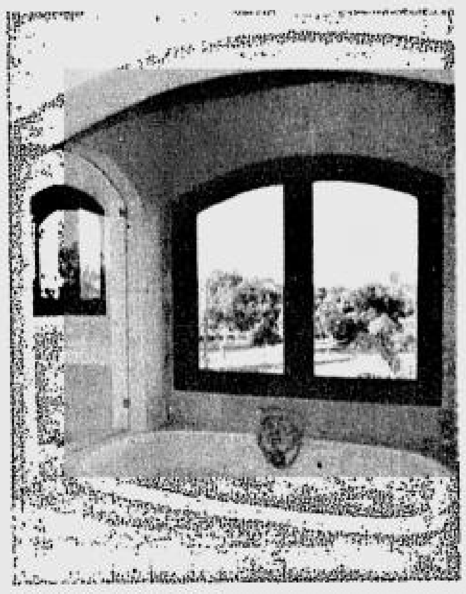
The houses she designed and built in Ayala Alabang combine form and function with high ceilings, bright walls and large and airy windows to create a feel of wider spaces. For Casa Toscana, Ana's houses were built not just for the sake of building houses but to create a new lifestyle based on the homeowners' needs, Ana explains.

She makes sure that every available space is properly utilized for the best layout and flow. Natural light sources, cross ventilation and room orientations are also some of Ana's main concerns when designing a home.

Going back to show business is the last thing on Ana's mind. She is perfectly happy with her family and her career as a designer.

"My family is a blessing, my work is an inspiration, and together it brings me a whole new sense of worth," she says.

For more information about The Barnyard and Casa Toscana, please call 850-4433.


A BATH with a view of trees, blue skies and sunlight

'I can't do the job'

From page A32

or," Vilma added.

She is gunning for her third and final term as Lipa City mayor in the coming elections. Earlier, Vilma was reported to be running for governor.

"I'm contented with being mayor of Lipa, and if given a new mandate, I'd stay so that I can continue with my vision and mission for this city," said Vilma. "Besides, one of my top priorities is still my family, and I'd definitely find no time for my family if I were governor or vice president," she added.

Vilma said she was able to weigh her options carefully while spending time with members of her family in the US.

Under Mayor Vi, Lipa has grown into a progressive city, with businesses booming, revenues multiplying, and big companies continuing to invest in the city.

Vilma described her vacation in Los Angeles, California, as "heaven."

The actress' mother, Milagros, said she had never seen her daughter "happier than any time in her life."

"All my daughters and their Kuya Sonny and all my grandchildren (except Luis) were all there," she said. "*Ang saya-saya nila* (They were all so happy). They were together on Christmas Day and New Year's Day, and everybody had fun. Real fun. You would find Vi and Ralph (Recto) inside the malls shopping. They pushed the cart themselves. Vi enjoyed every minute of it since she felt she was normal like everybody else.

HERE, at the bosom of her family during a vacation in Los Angeles, California, last December, Vilma made her decision not to accept an offer to be the running mate of a presidential candidate. On the extreme right are a beaming Vilma and husband Sen. Ralph Recto.

"They went sightseeing, walked on the streets without bodyguards. It's very rare that she gets to be with her sisters and brother. They would spend days on end together. They told each other stories until the wee hours of the morning."

When it comes to making movies, Vilma has not yet been able to find a role she likes to do this year.

"Several scripts have been sent to me, and I have read most of them. But so far, I cannot find any material that I really like," she admitted. "You know how it is. I only make movies once in a while so the project must be something good, and my role very different from what I've done before. It cannot be just another movie."

Vilma admitted that producer Lily Monteverde had sent her feelers to appear in "Mano Po 3" for the 2004 Metro Manila Film Festival. But the actress said she has yet to discuss with the Regal matriarch the plan.

"Perhaps after the campaign, I'd sit down with Mother and see if we can do a movie for the film fest," Vilma said.

From playboy ...

From page A32

addressed to "Clarence (sic) Stamp, the 'Rough Diamond.' It read: 'Would you please come to London to do a movie with Marlon Brando (which turned out to be the 'Superman' movie) and could you please stop by Paris to talk to some people about another project?'"

"Ultimately, when you're searching, the last obstacle is the search itself," Stamp points out. "You are ready for destination. If I am sitting here, and I get up to see where I am sitting, I lost my place. In other words, from the time the telegram came, I was gone. 'Superman' with Marlon Brando? Of course, that can't wait."

Going against type

So Stamp returned to cinema to star as the evil General Zod in "Superman II" and then shocked his colleagues by going against type and delightfully playing Bernadette, a world-weary transsexual in the comedy hit, "The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert."

Then came "Bowfinger," "Star Wars: Episode I—The Phantom Menace," and his lead role in Steven Soderbergh's "The Limey," which earned him a nomination for Best Male Lead at the 2000 Independent Spirit Award and for Best Actor at the London Film Circle Awards.

Asked how he chooses his roles, Stamp says, "I have to get a good feeling for the script. That is the prerequisite. Then when I get a good feeling, I ask who the director is and so forth. But I have to have this good feeling first after I read the script or else, I stop reading."

In the Rob Minkoff-directed "Haunted Mansion," Stamp appears with Eddie Murphy (Jim Evers), Jennifer Tilly (Madam Leota), Nathaniel Parker (Edward Gracey) and Marsha Thomason (Sara). Here he plays the slow-speaking butler Ramsley, who Stamp describes as an other-worldly, less than human person.

In the process, Stamp's Ramsley steals the movie. But no one is complaining.

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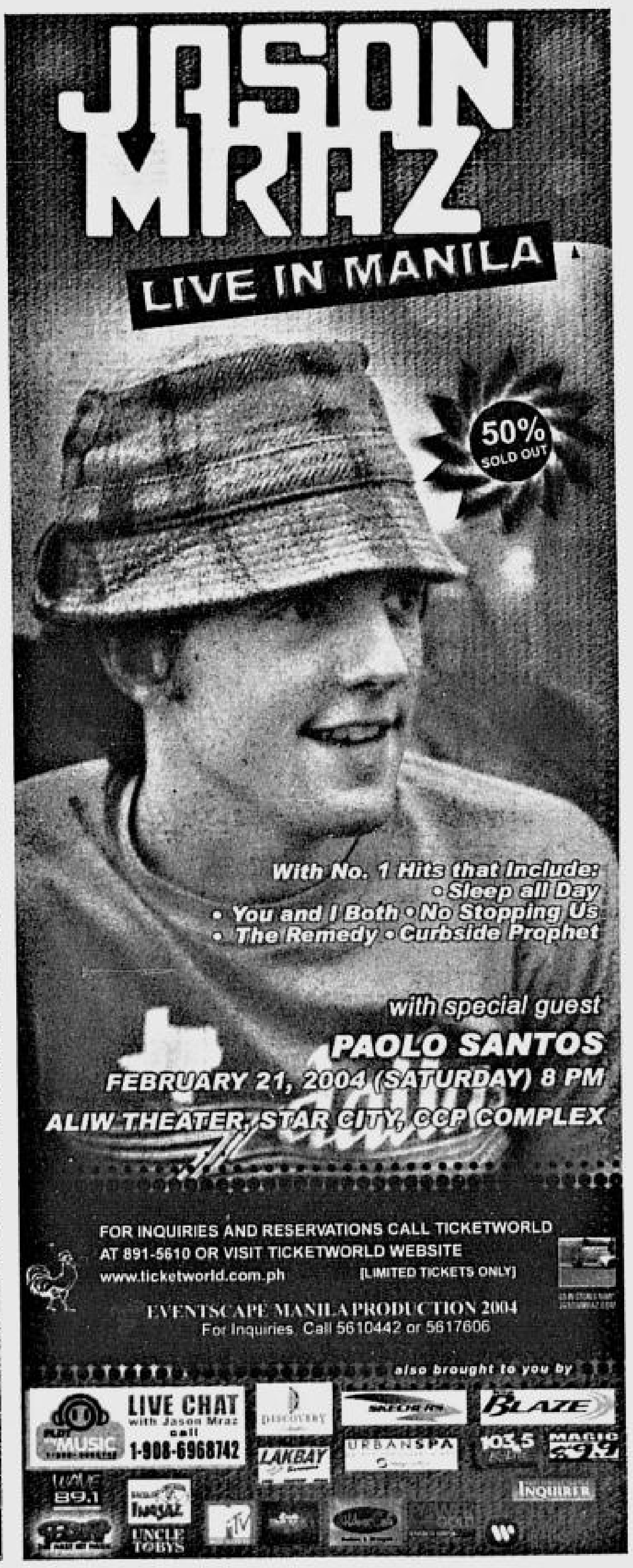
Screening Schedule for February 18

SM Megamall Cinema 7		SM Manila Cinema 7		SM Southmall Cinema 6		SM Cebu Cinema 4	
Lord of the Rings 3 (P13)	10:40am	Mystic River (R13)	11:35am	Mystic River (R13)	12:00nn	Mystic River (R13)	11:30am
Mystic River (R13)	2:30pm	Lord of the Rings 3 (P13)	2:20pm	Master & Commander (P13)	2:40pm	Lord of the Rings 3 (P13)	2:00pm
Lord of the Rings 3 (P13)	5:10pm	Master & Commander (P13)	6:10pm	Seabiscuit (GP)	5:30pm	Lord of the Rings 3 (P13)	5:35pm
Master & Commander (P13)	9:00pm	Mystic River (R13)	9:00pm	Seabiscuit (GP)	8:30pm	Master & Commander (P13)	9:30pm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'I can't do the job'

Mayor Vilma Santos refuses to run for VP

By Nap Gutierrez
Contributor

"I JUST thought I couldn't handle the job."

This is the reason why actress and Lipa City Mayor Vilma Santos turned down an offer to be the running mate of a presidential candidate.

The actress did not identify the presidentiable but people close to Vilma said the offer came from presidential candidate Eddie Villanueva. He invited Vilma through a common friend, actress Coney Reyes.

Vilma, 50, said she arrived at her decision while she was on vacation in the US last December.

"I am not cut out to be in such a high post," said Vilma, referring to the vice president's position. "I believe it would take so much of my time. I might also not find time anymore for myself. My siblings and my mother told me not to seek a higher position. They warned me my life would be turned inside out.

"As it is, being mayor of Lipa is already a Herculean task. Some people think it is an easy job but it's not. It only looks easy because there are so many people who are helping me. The people of Lipa have been very good to me. For as long as I have their trust and confidence, I will stay as their hardworking may-

I CAN'T/ A31

JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

VILMA: Being mayor of Lipa City is already a Herculean task.

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TERENCE STAMP

From playboy to transvestite

By Janet Susan R. Nepales
LA correspondent

INQUIRER EXCLUSIVE

LOS ANGELES—Terence Stamp is a great storyteller. He talks very slowly, enunciating every letter, exaggerating his b's in his distinct British accent. He calmly narrates with a poker face his colorful escapades in his past and present lives.

Dressed in a simple white long-sleeved unbuttoned shirt and a purple jacket, Stamp is a man whose confidence is reflected in his choice of roles.

He sips black coffee during this interview for his role as Ramsley, the cool, wry Vincent Price-like butler in "Haunted Mansion," the Disney family comedy thriller which was inspired by the popular theme park ride.

Unmoved

Stamp is unmoved that people sometimes don't understand him or the decisions that he has made in his life.

"I am extremely happy at the moment. I don't feel responsible that I have come from nowhere and I go from nowhere. I never questioned that in my life," he confidently says.

Blue-eyed with battered good looks, the soulful and rough-hewn Stamp used to be the poster boy of the swinging '60s with his whimsical lifestyle and his relationships with some of the most beautiful women of that time like Brigitte Bardot, Julie Christie and supermodel Jean Shrimpton.

Despite Stamp's stark white hair, we could still see the once ruggedly handsome young man in the actor who was one of the most recognizable faces in the '60s in British cinema, for his spaghetti westerns in the '70s and then later on, in American cinema.

"I was so identified with the '60s," he narrates. "I remember when I was on top of the world and I just finished working with Pier Paolo Pasolini. I was having dinner in London and here comes Brigitte Bardot coming toward me and saying, 'I am a cannibal.' To which I reply, 'I bet you are!'"

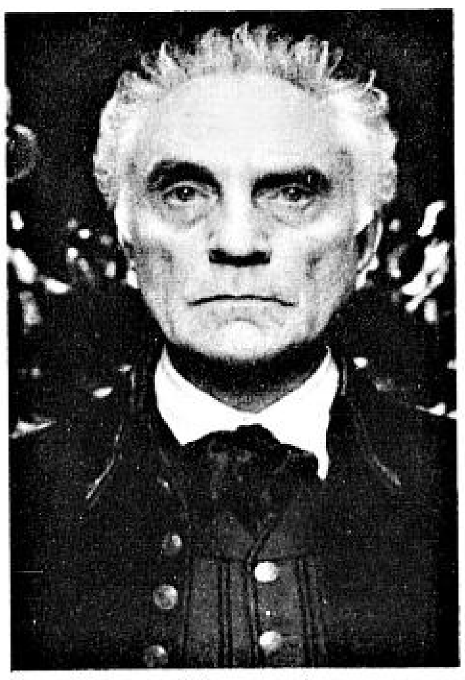
International attention

Born in Bow, London, Stamp made a mark as an actor with his motion picture debut in Peter Ustinov's "Billy Budd." His performance in the film earned him an Oscar nomination, a Golden Globe award for best newcomer, and international attention.

But despite a promising career, Stamp dropped out of the business and went to India for a 10-year sabbatical when his then girlfriend Jean Shrimpton left him. He "stayed at the Blue Diamond Hotel, grew my hair and didn't cut it for seven years, went around the world, did some yoga, practiced Zen and mingled with the Indians."

His life changed again in 1978. He received a cable from his long-lost agent, which was

FROM PLAYBOY/ A31



STAMP: Extremely happy at the moment

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Peso falters on fresh political woes

By Doris C. Dumlao

WORRIES over the country's volatile political situation and the balance-of-payment shortfall in January took their toll on the peso, which bucked the uptrend among other currencies in the region in early trade yesterday.

The peso hit an intra-day low of 56.17 to the dollar yesterday but rebounded in late trade to close at 56.02 on value turnover of $108.3 million. At the end of the day, it even gained 8 centavos from Monday's closing on banks' profit-taking from their dollar positions.

The currency's lowest close so far was at 56.20 recorded two weeks ago while the historic intraday low was at 56.22 to the dollar.

Dealers said concerns that the run-up to the May elections might turn violent as well as the $595-million BOP deficit in January weakened the peso in early trade.

The BOP measures the foreign exchange transactions arising between the domestic economy and the rest of the world.

But despite the weakness in the spot foreign exchange market, dealers said the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas stayed away from trading.

They said the huge BOP deficit in January—a reversal of the surpluses in the same month over the last two years--meant that slower foreign exchange inflows would exert even more pressure on the local currency.

The $595-million BOP deficit in January, a deterioration from the $77 million shortfall in December, was caused by outflows from debt servicing.

"That's part of it, which really reflects the seasonal factor that the first quarter, particularly in the first two months, the inflow is generally weaker," BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura said yesterday.

"The uncertainty on the political side has not helped," he said.

It was reported yesterday that two officials of the Commission on Elections had asked the Supreme Court to disqualify popular actor Fernando Poe Jr. from the presidential race on the ground that he was not a natural-born Filipino citizen.

A possible disqualification, analysts said, might lead to riots and violent protests by the actor's supporters similar to what happened during a Labor Day siege in Malacañang two years ago.

Meanwhile, the BSP is still banking on increased export earnings to generate $660 million in BOP surplus this year, higher than the $108-million surplus recorded in 2003.

The National Statistics Office has yet to release the country's export earnings report for January but based on recent trends, there was a significant rebound since December of last year.

This year, the BSP hopes to generate $14-$15 billion in gross international reserves. As of end-January, the GIR level stood at $16.08 billion.

PESO/ B2

LBP to sell ₱20B in NPAs

LAND Bank of the Philippines plans to sell up to P20 billion worth of non-performing assets to a special purpose asset vehicle this year.

Landbank, whose net income hit a historic high of P2 billion in 2003, is also targeting a sustained increase in profitability to P2.15 billion this year, bank president Gary Teves said in a press briefing Monday night.

The bank's nonperforming loan as a ratio of total loans improved to 14.7 percent last year from 18.5 percent in 2002. This amounted to P23.3 billion worth of sour loans in 2003, or about 7.2 percent lower than the P25.1 billion worth of NPLs incurred in 2002.

Real and other properties owned or acquired increased to P16.4 billion from P15.5 billion in 2002.

Landbank has tapped Ernest and Young as its financial adviser and also to help in inviting interested asset management companies to purchase its acquired assets.

"We are looking at an auction between June and September. The portfolio that we're looking at is about P20 billion," said LandBank vice president for asset recovery Omar Salvo.

Bank executive vice president Alfonso Reyno added the bank wanted to enjoy the flexibility of tapping SPVs but also being able to sell some assets on its own.

"Their (SPV's) advantage is that they know the buyers, but our advantage is that we've been working on some deals for a long time," Cruz said.

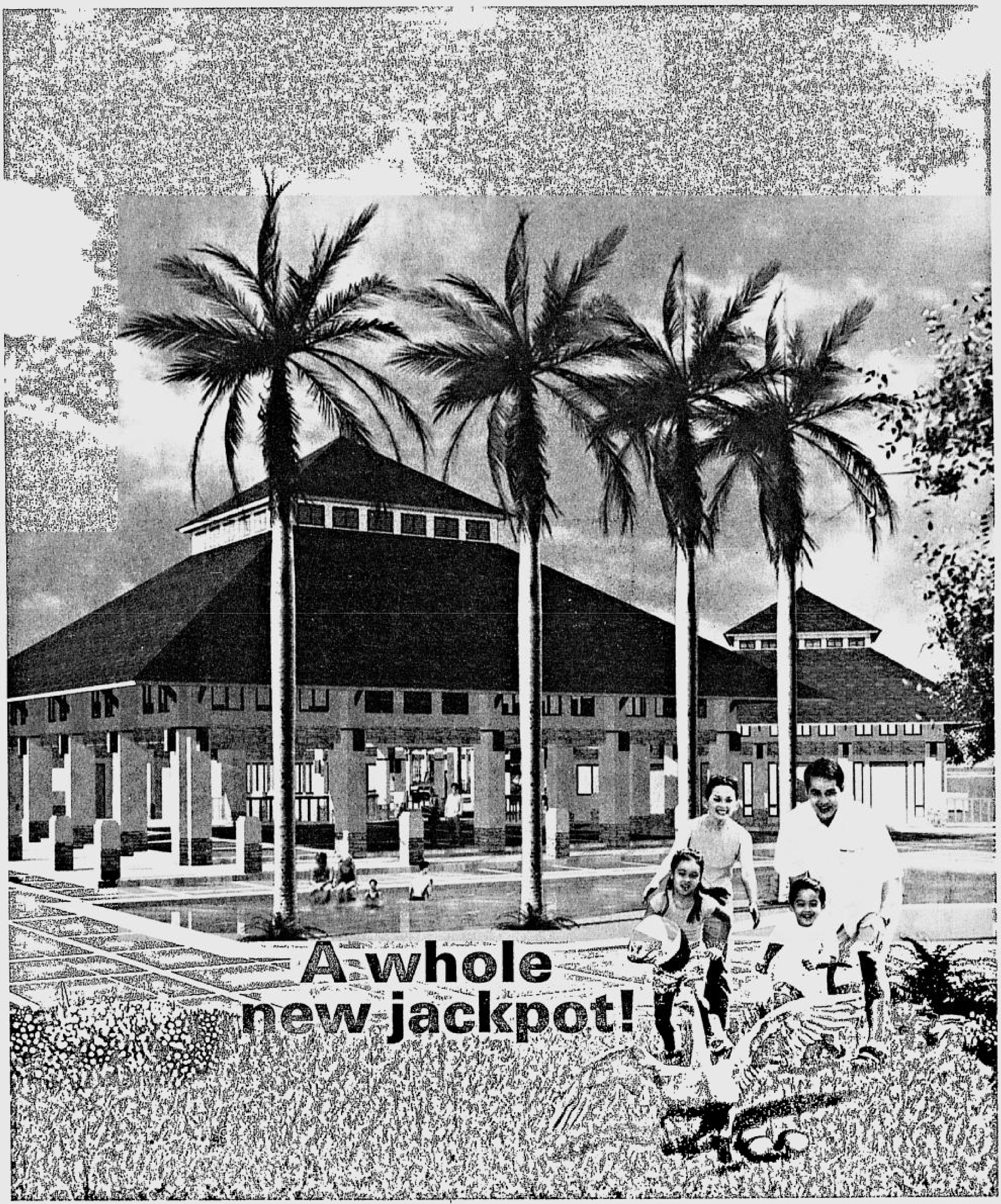
For property-based assets, Cruz said the bank would also consider possible joint venture deals with property developers.

Cruz said that while most of the assets would be sold to SPVs, the bank can simply pull out the specific assets that it could divest on its own.

Teves added that the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' plan to ease the implementing rules and regulations of the SPV Law would also help banks in their asset disposal.

The plan is to stretch out the provisioning for non-per-

LBP/ B4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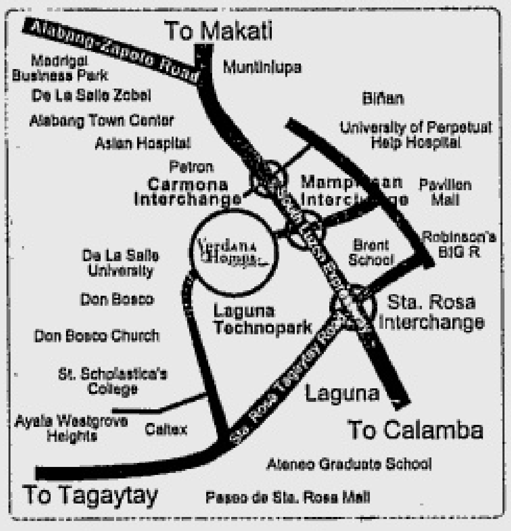

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US rejects RP request for help on telecom row

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE US Federal Communications Commission has turned down the request of the National Telecommunications Commission to assist local telecom officials facing an inquiry on a possible case of price-fixing.

In a letter to NTC Commissioner Ronald Solis and two of his deputies, FCC Chair Michael Powell said the US Department of Justice acts independently from the FCC. He instead advised the Philippine government to make representations and inquiries with the US Department of State.

Solis said he would discuss the Philippines' next course of action with the foreign affairs department. NTC had offered local carriers assistance in addressing the problem.

Help from the NTC would consist of certifying some memos or circulars that would strengthen the case of the local telecom executives under US probe for alleged anti-competitive behavior.

The US justice department last month served 30 Filipino telecom executives, attending a conference in Hawaii, with subpoenas to appear before a grand jury in Honolulu.

The incident initially drew an angry response from Malacañang but reactions eventually cooled down.

The US action revived a dispute between American and Filipino telecom firms over termination rates, which are paid by domestic carriers to complete calls on the networks of foreign carriers.

"Please be advised that the investigation initiated by the DOJ is independent of the FCC and is based upon DOJ's responsibilities under the US antitrust laws. It would not be appropriate for the FCC to interfere in the DOJ investigation or otherwise advise the Philippine government on behalf of the US government as to the investigation," said Powell in his letter to the NTC dated Feb. 4 but received by the commission only last Friday, Feb. 13.

Solis pointed out that while the problem may have stemmed from previous complaints of US carriers AT&T and MCI Worldcom that Philippine carriers behaved like a cartel when they uniformly raised termination rates a year ago, the issue had been resolved by the local phone firms and their counter parties.

"The progress being made to restore telecommunications services between our countries is known to our governments and is a matter of public record in the US. Moreover, both the FCC and the DOJ are acting independently in accordance with each agency's statutory obligations," said the FCC in its letter.

The stop-payment order issued by the FCC to US carriers on March 2003 on six Filipino firms was lifted one after the other starting last year as Bayan Telecommunications Inc., Digital Telecommunications Phils. Inc., Globe Telecom Inc., Smart Communications Inc., Subic Telecom, and Philippine Long Distance Co. forged separate termination agreements with their US partners.

As part of the separate agreements, US firms agreed to settle their dues with the local carriers.

The US-Philippine route is the fourth-largest international route based on outgoing US calls, with about 1.7 billion minutes in 2001, according to data from the FCC. At that time, local carriers were paid around $190 million that year. The traffic comes from two million Filipinos working in the US.

RP, Japan finalizing poultry deals

SINGAPORE—The Philippines has finalized deals to ship small amounts of poultry to Japan and more sales to the same destination are likely, a senior Philippine trade official said on Tuesday.

"Japan has agreed to buy our poultry. We have confirmed the sale of some poultry. The balance amount is yet to be finalized," Rita Imelda Palabyab, president of the Philippine Association of Broiler Integrators, told Reuters.

She declined to give details of the volumes being negotiated.

"The shipment should be leaving in a couple of weeks," she added.

JAPAN has been scrambling for cargoes after bird flu outbreaks in Thailand, China and the United States. PDI PHOTO

Japan has been scrambling for cargoes after bird flu outbreaks in Thailand, China and the United States forced it to ban shipments from those nations and look for shipments from countries free of the virus.

Japanese Agriculture Minister Yoshiyuki Kamei said on Sunday that the country might resume imports of heat-treated processed poultry from China and Thailand if experts confirmed the bird-flu affected countries met Japanese sanitary standards.

The Philippines and Malaysia have remained free from the bird flu that has spread across Asia, killing at least 20 people and leading to the culling of millions of chickens.

Malaysian industry sources said last week that a maiden cargo of 10 to 12 containers of boneless chicken, totaling about 200 to 240 tons, was due for Japan between end-March and early-April.

Japan has itself reported an outbreak of bird flu, leading to the slaughter of about 35,000 chickens.

The Philippines produces about 500 million kg (1.1 billion lb) of poultry meat a year, most of it to meet domestic demand. *Reuters*

Peso falters on fresh . . .

From page B1

The stock market shared the same sentiment. Share prices closed lower for a second day yesterday as investors sold shares in the absence of fresh buying incentives, traders said.

The 30-company Philippine Stock Exchange Index ended down 0.11 point, or 0.01 percent, at 1,464.88, adding to Monday's 1.1-percent loss. Decliners led gainers 25 to 22, while 36 stocks were unchanged.

"The market continues to consolidate on the lack of fresh news," said DA Market Securities President Nestor Aguila.

Blue chip Globe Telecom, the most actively traded stock, dragged the main index lower by falling P5, or 0.6 percent, to P870.

Another stock that weighed on the market was Petron, which closed down 15 centavos, or 4.4 percent, at P3.30.

Traders said some investors bought stocks of select companies that are set to release their earnings reports. Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., which capped the index loss with its P10, or 1.1 percent, gain to P930, is set to release its 2003 financial report tomorrow.

PLDT affiliate Pilipino Telephone rose 2 centavos, or 1.2 percent, to P1.76. The mobile phone company last month submitted a copy of its rehabilitation plan that projected it will post a net profit of P402.4 million this year, rebounding from an estimated net loss of P3.33 billion in 2003, on improved gains from its operations.

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16-17	People Philosophy Management (PPM)
17-19	Leading and Managing Change
23-24	Creating a Balanced Scorecard
24-26	Embracing Change
30-31	English Speech Lessons (Level 1-3)

DATE April	PROGRAM
31-02	Basic Selling Course
13-14	Problem Solving and Decision Making (PSDM)
14-16	Fundamentals of Effective Marketing
14-16	Team Building: Sharing A Destiny
20-21	Managing Motivation and Control
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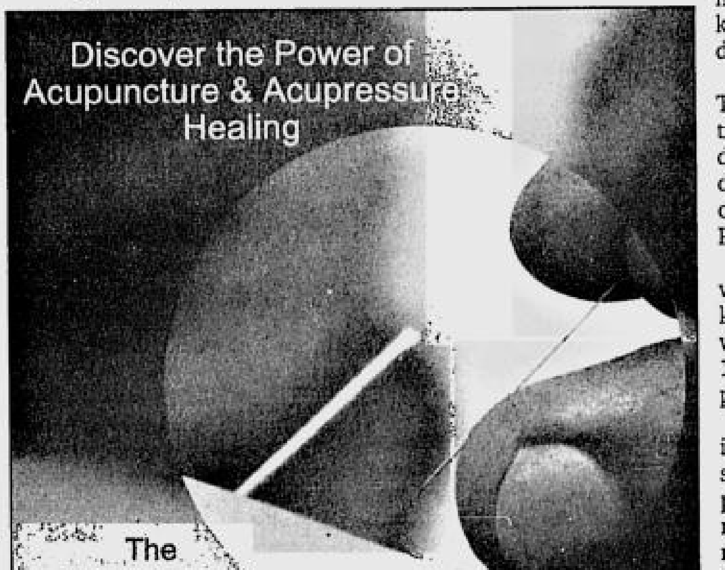

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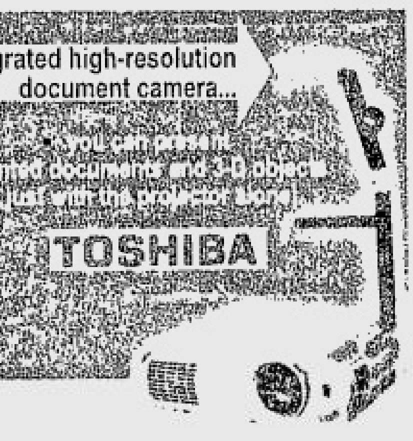

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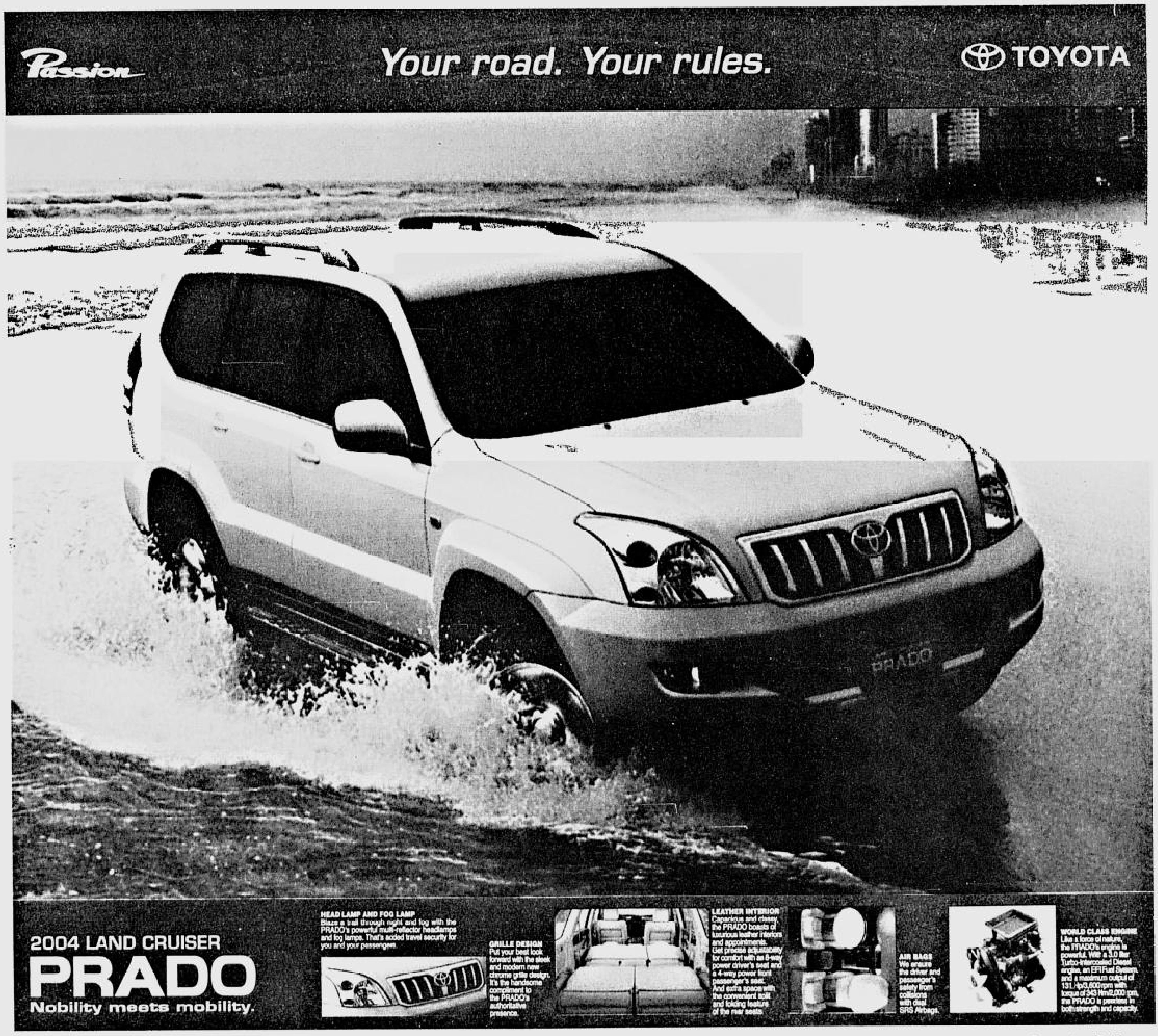

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Jollibee unveils int'l expansion

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

FAST-FOOD giant Jollibee Foods Corp. is moving further to seizing the Asian market in the next few years as it revealed plans to expand in Indonesia and complete its takeover of a leading fast-food chain in China.

Ysmael V. Baysa, chief finance officer, said that by 2010, the company expects to earn 55 percent of its revenues from international operations and 45 percent from local business.

Today, Jollibee gets roughly 5 percent of its revenues from international stores and the balance of 95 percent from its Philippine stores.

Baysa also said Jollibee may complete its purchase of China's leading fast-food chain Yonghe King by March after it makes its first payment of $11.5 million for the transfer of an 85 percent ownership of the company to Jollibee.

Jollibee agreed to pay $22.5 million for control of the Chinese food company. It has yet to disclose when it will pay the balance of $11 million.

Jollibee International (BVI) Ltd., a wholly owned subsidiary of Jollibee, signed early this month a deal to buy 85 percent of Belmont Enterprises Ventures Ltd., the holding company of the Yonghe Group of Companies.

The selling shareholders of Belmont were venture capital fund Baring Asia Private Equity Fund which will give up 67 percent and Academy Resources Ltd., led by the founders of Yonghe, who will cede 18 percent of their holdings. Jollibee plans to fund the acquisition using its surplus cash. Baysa said another option is to fund half of the amount through borrowings.

System-wide sales, which take into account sales through customers and franchises for Yonghe King, grew 22.4 percent to $24 million last year despite the outbreak of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome or SARS. It runs 77 stores in key cities in China like Shanghai, Beijing, Wuhan and Hangzhou.

Baysa also said that after China, Jollibee plans to open new stores or acquire food businesses in Indonesia.

In an investors' briefing, Jollibee said its net income rose 20.8 percent to P1.26 billion last year from P1.04 billion in 2002. In the fourth quarter, profits grew 27.1 percent to P346 million driven by strong sales and cost savings.

ABS-CBN to tie up with Canadian firm on cable project

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

TELEVISION giant ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp. is in talks with a Canadian firm for a possible tie-up in providing cable products and services.

Maloli Espinosa-Manalastas, vice president for government and corporate affairs, said that the media company is ironing out compliance to Canadian laws involving the content of cable products to be distributed in that country.

She did not identify the firm.

As proof of the company's aggressive expansion in the international market for its cable operations, ABS-CBN also plans to set up a news bureau in Milan.

It is also eyeing putting up news bureaus in the United States East Coast area, news and public affairs senior vice president Ricardo Puno said.

The company yesterday launched "Impact 2004," ABS-CBN News Channel's new talk show on the presidential elections this May. Its pilot telecast will be this Friday at 8 p.m.

ABS-CBN reported a net profit of P888.8 million for the first nine months of 2003.

The rise in earnings was attributed to increased ad spending, the expansion of international revenue and the controlled and managed growth of operating expenses.

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BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	17	17	16.75	16.75	34,000
Bank of the Phil. Islands	43.5	44.5	43	44.5	1,327,300
Citystate Savings Bank	16.25	16.25	16.25	16.25	2,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	38	38	38	38	61,900
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.54	0.59	0.54	0.57	910,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	26	27	26	26.5	225,000
Philippine National Bank	23.75	23.75	23.5	23.5	51,200
Phil. Savings Bank	26.5	26.5	26.5	26.5	20,000
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	12.5	12.5	12.5	12.5	100
Union Bank of the Phil.	26	26	26	26	14,900
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Manulife Financial Corp.	2010	2035	2010	2035	280
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.32	1.32	1.32	1.32	115,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	122	130	119	130	51,820
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1510	1560	1510	1555	6,270
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	23.25	23.25	23	23	6,900
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.7	0.7	0.69	0.7	1,580,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	870	870	865	870	128,230
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.044	0.044	0.043	0.043	3,000,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.039	0.039	0.038	0.038	400,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	1.74	1.76	1.64	1.76	40,109,000
Transpacific Broadcast	1.38	1.38	1.38	1.38	80,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	920	935	915	930	88,360
Philweb Corp.	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	2,500,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	19.25	19.25	19	19.25	38,200
Manila Electric Co. B	31	31.5	30.5	31.5	186,100
Petron Corp.	3.4	3.4	3.2	3.3	4,195,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.24	1.24	1.24	1.24	8,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	30,000
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	200,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	0.25	0.3	0.25	0.3	160,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.32	0.33	0.32	0.32	540,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.58	1.58	1.58	1.58	100,000
Union Cement Corp.	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	196,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.15	3.15	3.15	3.15	275,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	30	30	30	30	700
Jollibee Foods Corp.	19.5	19.5	19	19.5	6,000
RFM Corp.	0.68	0.68	0.68	0.68	100,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	60,000
San Miguel Corp. A	55	55	54.5	55	48,300
San Miguel Corp. B	68.5	69	68.5	69	280,100
Vitarich Corp.	0.27	0.29	0.27	0.29	600,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala Corp.	5.8	5.9	5.8	5.9	1,357,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	208,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.021	0.021	0.02	0.02	5,000,000
APC Group Inc.	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	200,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.6	1.84	1.6	1.84	51,000
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	100,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.6	0.6	0.58	0.6	7,270,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.19	0.19	0.175	0.19	600,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	40,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	23.25	23.25	23	23	215,100
Ionics Inc.	1.42	1.42	1.4	1.42	270,000
Macroasia Corp.	0.52	0.52	0.52	0.52	10,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.04	1.04	1.04	1.04	1,130,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	70,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.29	0.29	0.28	0.29	4,960,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	13.25	13.25	13.25	13.25	16,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.26	0.27	0.26	0.27	15,040,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Interphil Labs Inc. A	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	37,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Bello Corp.	0.48	0.49	0.48	0.49	100,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	60,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	200,000
Mondragon Intl Phils Inc.	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	480,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	23	23.25	22.75	23.25	76,200
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,400
PLDT (10% Pref) Series X	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,300
PLDT 10% Pref Series Aa	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,700
PLDT 10% Pref Series Bb	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,300
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	5.8	5.8	5.8	5.8	3,583,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	50,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.21	0.215	0.21	0.215	3,240,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.06	1.08	1.04	1.04	3,906,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.165	0.165	0.165	0.165	550,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.095	0.095	0.095	0.095	100,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	2.02	2.02	2.02	2.02	50,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	5.9	5.9	5.9	5.9	5,166,000
MINING					
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	190,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	10,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	70,000
OIL					
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.003	0.003	0.003	0.003	4,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	40,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	0.14	0.19	0.14	0.19	100,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.035	0.035	0.035	0.035	200,000

DISCLOSURES

LEISURE and Resorts World Corp. denied having any information that could explain the 50-percent increase in its share price that rose from P0.20 to P0.30 each.

* * *

ELECTED new directors of **IPVG Corp.** were Srinivas Polishetty, Ari-Ben Sebastian, Marco Santos, Christopher Cox and Morgan Lourdenadin. Manuel Gonzalez and Miriam Rose Ivan Pereira resigned as directors and were replaced by Catherine Uy and Alaggapan Nachiappan. Renato Valdecantos resigned as independent director and was replaced by Rene Fuentes.

* * *

CEBU Holdings Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on April 23, 10 a.m. at the Sinulog Ballroom of City Sports Club Cebu. Stockholders of record as of March 1 will be entitled to vote at the meeting.

* * *

ISLAND Information and Technology Inc. changed its external auditors from A.Q. Sevilla and Co. to Diaz, Murillo, Dalupan and Co.

* * *

RENE Chanyungco was appointed chief financial officer of **Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co.**.

* * *

PCI Leasing and Finance Inc. bought 45,000 of its own shares at P1.32 each.

* * *

NESTOR Romulo was elected corporate secretary of **Metro Alliance Holdings and Equities Corp.**

* * *

PHILIPPINE Long Distance and Telephone Co.'s investors' briefing on Feb. 19, 4 p.m. will be held at Makati A & B Function Rooms of Makati Shangri-La Hotel.

Compiled by Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research

CURRENCIES

February 17, 2004 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.782595	1.000000	56.0850
Japan	Yen	0.007419	0.009480	0.5317
United Kingdom	Pound	1.475818	1.885800	105.7651
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.100702	0.128677	7.2168
Switzerland	Franc	0.631941	0.807494	45.2883
Canada	Dollar	0.594497	0.759648	42.6049
Singapore	Dollar	0.467193	0.596979	33.4816
Australia	Dollar	0.616897	0.788271	44.2102
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.075904	2.652590	148.7705
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.208687	0.266660	14.9556
Brunei	Dollar	0.465803	0.595203	33.3820
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000093	0.000119	0.0067
Thailand	Baht	0.020113	0.025700	1.4414
UAE	Dirham	0.213072	0.272264	15.2699
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.274000	71.4523
Argentina	Peso	0.268702	0.343348	19.2567
Brazil	Real	0.268564	0.343171	19.2467
Denmark	Kroner	0.133827	0.171004	9.5908
India	Rupee	0.017337	0.022153	1.2425
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.205974	0.263193	14.7612
Mexico	New Peso	0.071555	0.091433	5.1280
New Zealand	Dollar	0.548535	0.700918	39.3110
Norway	Kroner	0.112963	0.144344	8.0955
Pakistan	Rupee	0.013706	0.017513	0.9822
South Africa	Rand	0.118845	0.151860	8.5171
Korea	Won	0.000675	0.000862	0.0483
Sweden	Kroner	0.109150	0.139472	7.8223
Syria	Pound	0.015196	0.019417	1.0890
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.023679	0.030257	1.6970
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000409	0.000522	0.0293

LBP to sell . . .

From page B1

forming assets to 10 years from the current seven years.

Teves also announced that over the last two years, the bank was able to realign its loan portfolio to favor its "priority" sectors -small farmers and fisherfolk, small and medium and micro-enterprises, agribusiness, livelihood, agri-infrastructure, agri-related and environmental conservation projects.

He said these priority sectors now accounted for 56 percent of total loan portfolio, from only a 36 percent share in 2000. *Doris C. Dumlao*

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Election jitters push T-bond rates higher

By Michelle V. Remo

THE COST of the government's four-year borrowings rose 37.5 basis points to 10.875 percent as the market sought for higher returns amid a climate of uncertainty.

The yield for the four-year T-bond stood at 10.5 percent during last month's auction.

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He added that the increase in the coupon rate for the four-year T-bond was also due to the recent move by the BSP to increase the liquidity reserve requirement for banks.

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Mendiola, however, said the 10.875-percent coupon rate was reasonable for the government to accept, considering the rate in the secondary market now stands at 11 percent.

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BCDA

BASES CONVERSION DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

INVITATION FOR PROPOSALS

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RUFO COLAYCO
President and Chief Executive Officer

(PDI – Feb. 11, 16 & 18, 2004)

Office of the President

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Bases Conversion Development Authority

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President & CEO

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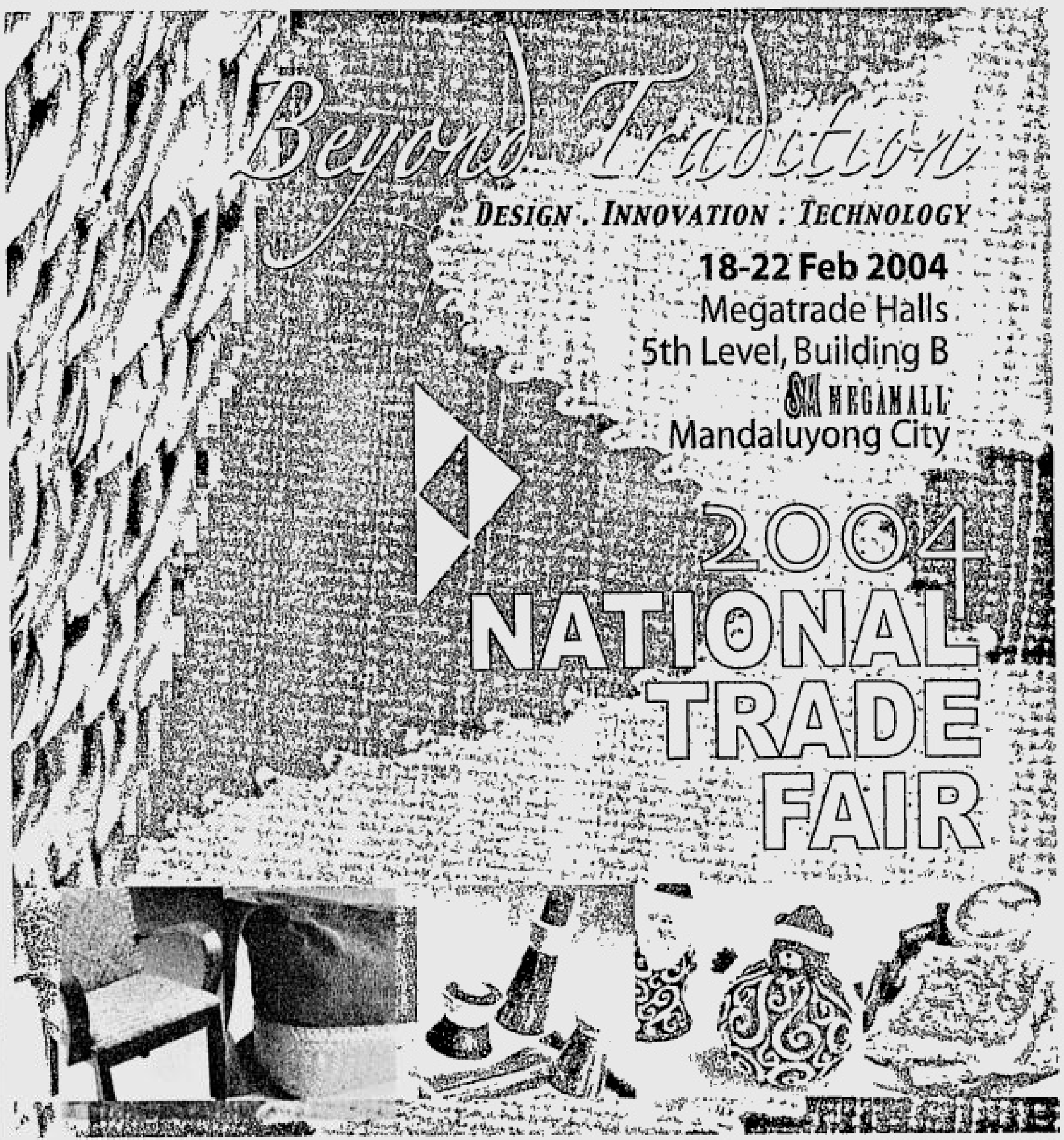

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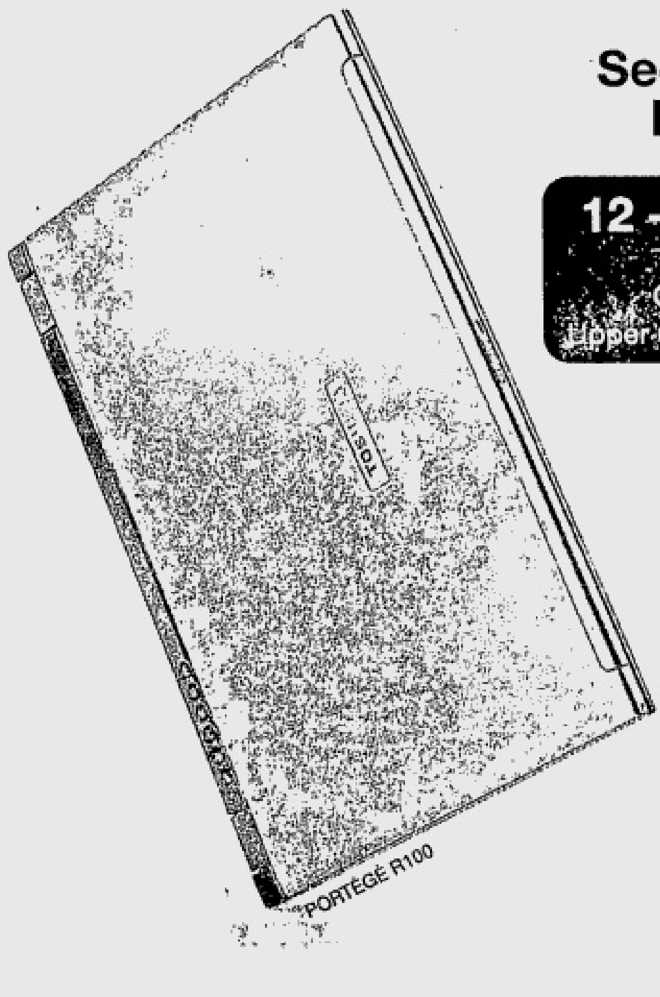

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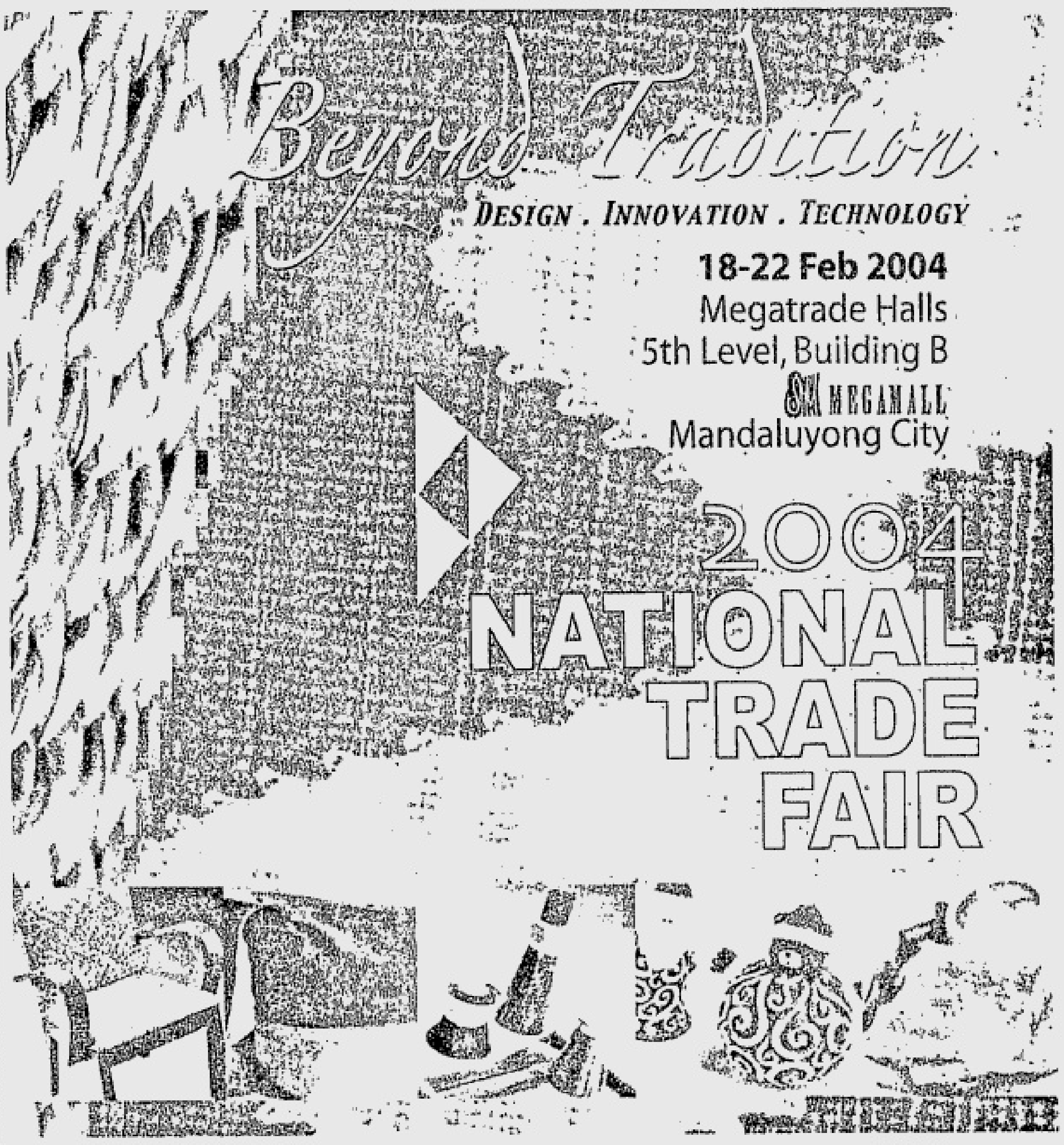

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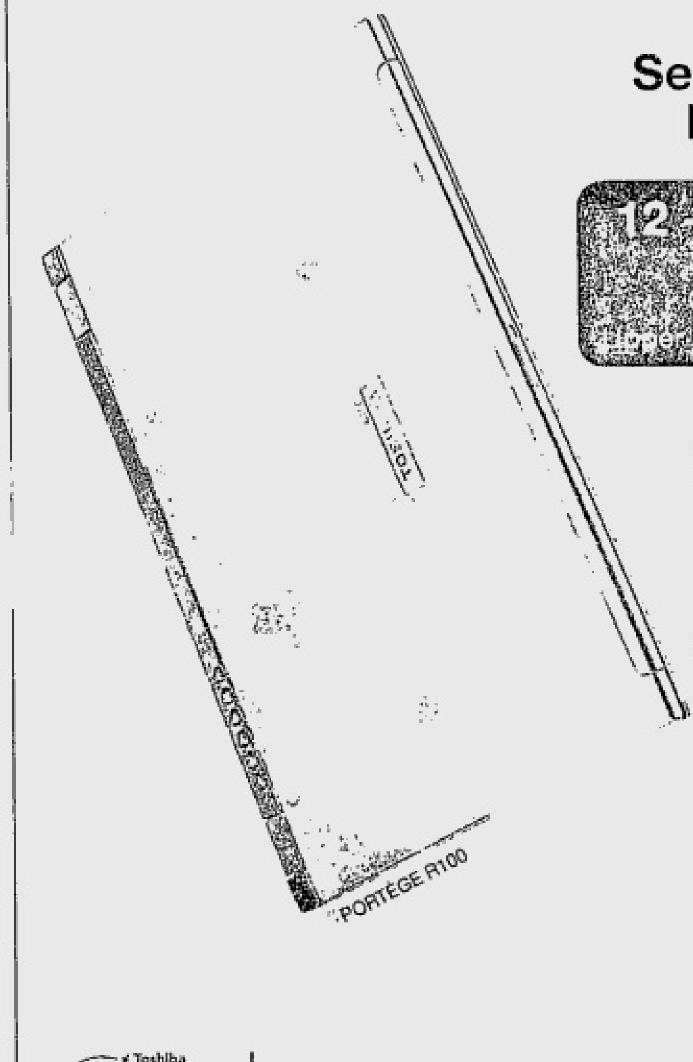

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Newspaper boy becomes US banker

By Ysabel San Pedro-Schuld

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Gabriel a.k.a. Gabe related that his father, George de los Santos, had a successful family-run printing shop business in Makati called Gesan Printing Shop and his uncle, Jun de los Santos, also owned and managed a printing shop called Jun de los Santos Trading. He explained, "The De-los Santos clan made an imprint in the printing industry and I was surprised when we moved to Honolulu since we were doing well in the Philippines."

GABRIEL de los Santos

YSABEL SAN PEDRO-SCHULD/CONTRIBUTOR

New home in Honolulu

Gabe's paternal grandfather, Florencio de los Santos, a military officer in US Army, had petitioned their whole family, Gabe's father George, mother and all five of their children. Gabe, being 11 at that time and second to the oldest of five siblings, recalled, "It was a culture shock for a kid of 11 since I tried to fit in with my American peers and stay together as a family."

In the US, Gabe worked as newspaper boy and then worked at Burger King flipping burgers when he was a teenager. He graduated at Farrington High School in Honolulu in 1988 at the age of 18. He mentioned, "I concentrated on my studies and enrolled in an associate degree in Business Management at the Kapiolani Community College where I graduated in 1994."

Gabe related that it was in college where he met his future wife, Ellen, a Filipina, who was born and raised in Hawaii. "We were classmates in a Tagalog class. Ellen and I were paired to be husband and wife in a marriage skit. Ellen was born and raised in Lanai City, Hawaii and she does not know how to speak any Tagalog." He added that in the beginning they were seated far from each other but as the class progressed they became very good friends. "It was fate and we got married in 1994."

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This hectic work schedule characterized his life whether in Hawaii or Las Vegas. In 1997, Gabe and Ellen moved to Las Vegas where he also held three jobs. "I worked from 5 a.m. till 2 p.m. as a travel agent with an Internet travel agent called lowestfares.com and also worked as a sales ticket clerk selling tickets at the Bellagio Casino Hotel from 6 p.m. till 1 a.m." On the weekends, he worked as a hairdresser in Las Vegas, too.

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If Life Planners are the lifeblood of the Sony Life system, the agency directors are the veins through which these life planners pass through. Merging marketing, management and HR into the position, agency directors are tasked with recruiting, training and coaching Life Planners. The success of agency directors greatly relies on the success of the Life Planners.

Rigorous selection

Since Life Planners are commissioned with the responsibility of providing outstanding insurance programs tailor-fitted to each customer's needs, Sony Life's policy is to hire only top-caliber and highly qualified insurance agents. "Our selection process is very tedious and we only get people with good background, skills and right ingredients to succeed," explains Santi Santamaria, one of Sony Life's agency directors. This 30-year-old De La Salle University graduate finds being an agency director fulfilling as he is able to become a part of the mission that the position carries.

Upon recruitment, the agency directors train and coach Life Planners to do the business. Agency directors teach and rehearse Life Planners on how to do presentations in a way that will get the message across clearly. A multi-faceted job, agency directors are also tasked to train Life Planners on how to conduct financial needs analysis and recommend the best customized life insurance program for their clients.

Next, agency directors do coaching.

ALL ABOUT WORK

"It's very difficult to motivate people because motivation is really from within. Hence, we do our best to inspire them, to lead by example, to become a true friend, to be decisive and authoritative when necessary," shares Mike Galang, one of the newest agency directors in the group. Galang also shares that the group designs and conducts sales contests and drives that serve as a reward system for good performance.

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Not a lot of people recognize the value of an insurance plan. It is the goal of these agency directors to make people realize that life insurance is one of the best tools of risk management.

"Only very few good people choose to do this noble task, thus in a way, it is the pride of the agency director to spark the needed change in the life insurance industry," explains Lani Mendoza, one of the few female agency directors in a male dominated group. An agency director of Sony Life since Sept. 1, 2001, Mendoza also treasures her position because of the fulfillment it offers. "What makes that difference is the fact that I am selling with a soul. With the right programs and services, I make another person's life and his or her family's better and more secure. That in itself is reason enough for me to find satisfaction in my career."

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To ease the apprehension of skeptics regarding insurance policies, agency directors apply a new approach in the insurance business. "We make sure that our Life Planners do the right thing. We want our clients to buy life insurance for the right reasons, unlike the current practices of relationships only based on sales or pressure selling," adds Michael Agleron, another new recruit.

For agency directors, the position is a lifelong commitment. Agency directors are expected to be of assistance for life, if possible. "The mission is great and it will take a long time to fulfill the mission. We are committed to the mission, the company, our Life Planners and most especially, to their clients' families and loved ones," swears Joel Cairo, a new member of the group.

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The multi-faceted job of agency directors require a lot from these dedicated Sony Life employees. The job requires the proper knowledge, attitude, skills and habit or KASH as they commonly term it. "It's takes consistent hard work to become a successful agency director. You need to keep on doing the right things all the time. You need to keep on following the model of success," claims Ted Tinsay.

Tinsay, a pure-blooded Atenean and agency director for over a year, adds that passion for work is vital in answering to the challenge of recruiting the best people and managing and coaching them almost everyday. "When agency directors start not to believe in what they do, it's almost guaranteed that they will begin to fail," adds Cairo.

Many of the agency directors of Sony Life have very successful backgrounds but their desire for something more led them to the business of providing financial security to people. The opportunity to give people an option for a better life is a reward in itself. "The mission which is a big, big challenge, the stigma that you can change, the pride and prestige that come along with it, the financial rewards, the service to people and their families, the opportunity of providing better lives to many people, maybe in two words, true success, are the reasons we are in this," shares Santamaria.

SONY Life's agency directors (from left to right): Mr. Michael Agleron, Mr. Santi Santamaria, Mr. Mike Galang, Ms Lani Mendoza, Mr. Joel Cairo, and Mr. Ted Tinsay

Treats for workaholics can keep you sane

WORKING MOM

An Mercado Alcantara

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What drives us so? The insane belief that we have to be perfect. And that if we don't measure up, we are inadequate. It's a burden many working moms carry. We push ourselves at work and at home because we feel we have to justify why we work at all and not stay home with the kids. We feel pressured to do it all. Take one more appointment even as we are faxing exam guides to our kids at home, practicing the daughter's elocution piece even as we are trying to write that bloody memo to our boss, and giving dinner instructions as we negotiate bottom line commitments.

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Schedule little pit stops in your day. Here are some treats you can schedule in today.

Take a hint from smokers. If there's one thing I envy about smokers it's that they give themselves a chance to get up from their desks, leave the office building, or go into designated smoking spots, and take a nicotine break. Their body sets off a craving signal and they follow. I often wish we had a natural craving for mind release. Or maybe we do, I just haven't listened to it very well. So, I take the cue from the smokers. When I see a batch of them go off for a smoke, I grab my favorite book and get a literature fix. In the time it takes for them to consume one cigarette, I can usually read half a chapter. It satisfies my craving for learning and gives me strength for a few more hours of work.

Take a real lunch break. A working mom once told me, "I don't have lunch. I just swallow." Like many of us, she feels there's not enough time to leave her desk for a full meal. Work-life gurus now say, you can't go on sheer will power alone. You need to fuel your concentration. You need to give both your mind and body a break in the middle of the day. Get up, stretch, recharge, and then come back to your work with renewed vigor.

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PEOPLE at WORK

E-mail: peopleatwork@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Raul O. Marcelo
Subsection Editor Regina Galang Reyes

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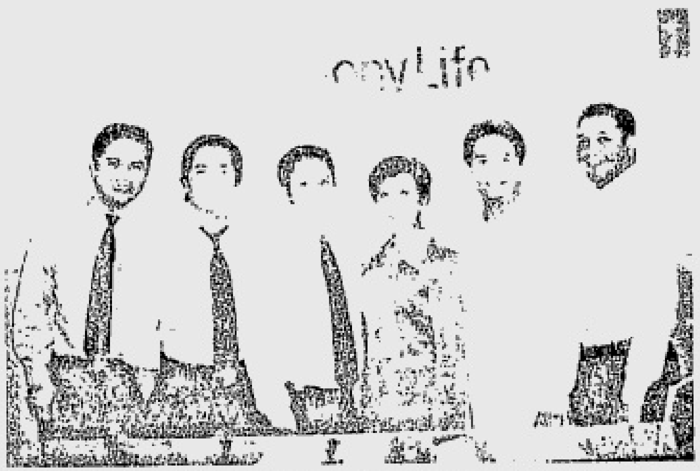

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3	BROTHER BEAR
4	LAST SAMURAI

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1	CHASING LIBERTY
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2	THE GRUDGE
3	MILAN
4	STUCK ON YOU

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1	MILAN
2	LAST SAMURAI
3	CHASING LIBERTY
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7	HAUNTED MANSION
8	SHIRI
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10	A GOOD LAWYER'S WIFE

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3	IN THE CUT
4	LAST SAMURAI
5	MAGIC KITCHEN
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7	CHASING LIBERTY
8	HAUNTED MANSION
9	MILAN
10	TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE
11	I AM DINA
12	BROTHER BEAR

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1	DIABLO
2	MILAN
3	STUCK ON YOU
4	HAUNTED MANSION

SM CITY ILOILO
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10	MILAN
11	TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE
12	MAGIC KITCHEN

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2	CHASING LIBERTY
3	MILAN
4	WISHING STAIRS

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2	STUCK ON YOU
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5	MILAN
6	MILAN

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2	MILAN
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2 RUNAWAY JURY	2 COLD MOUNTAIN	2 COLD MOUNTAIN 11:45 2:50 5:55 9:00	GUARANTEED SEATS THX 2 RUNAWAY JURY 12:50, 3:30, 6:10 8:50 11:30	2 COLD MOUNTAIN
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4 COLD MOUNTAIN	4 BONE SNATCHER		GUARANTEED SEATS 4 CHASING LIBERTY 1:10 3:30 5:50 8:10, 10:30	4 HAUNTED MANSION
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3	
4	

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9	IN THE CUT

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4	IN THE CUT

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3 (DTS)	KUYA

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2 (DTS)	KUYA
3 (DOLBY)	COLD MOUNTAIN
4	WISHING STAIR

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4	WISHING STAIR

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3	COLD MOUNTAIN

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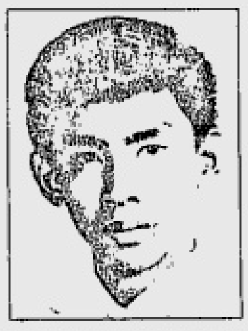

IGNATIUS VINCENT T. WARQUE
a.k.a. "CHITO"

The person appearing above has two (2) pending warrants of arrest issued by the following judicial courts:

a) Regional Trial Court – Branch 55, Mandaue City docketed as Criminal Case No. DU-9878 for ESTAFA; and

b) Municipal Trial Court in Cities – Branch 1, Mandaue City docketed as Criminal Case No. 27405 for violation of Batas Pambansa Blg. 22.

(PDI–Feb. 14, 18 & 21, 2004)

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John 3:16

Irenea "Nening" Salvacion Vega

Died in Feb. 14, 2004 at the age of 82.

Irenea, the wife of the late **Mario M. Vega**, is survived by her children **Aristeo** and **Nelia Narido**; **Ma. Aparicion** and **Romeo del Castillo**; **Raul** and **Maria Lourdes Abola**; **Oswaldo** and **Corazon Santos**; sister **Marietta, OSC**; **Carlitos** and **Bebie Elena Laguican**; **Natividad** and **Venancio Panganduyon** and grandchildren.

Her body lies in state at the Vega Ancestral House in Balingasag, Misamis Oriental. Interment will be on Saturday, Feb. 21, 2004 at the Balingasag Catholic Cemetery after the 3 p.m. Mass.

CARMEN ABAD Vda. de CÁRDENAS

Peacefully joined her Creator,
her loving husband ***Manuel Perez Cárdenas****,*
and her son ***Manuel Jr. (Ling)***
on February 15, 2004 at the age of 86.

Her children **MIKE & KAREN**, and **PENNY**; her grandchildren **SANDY & MARVIN KEENE, TIM**, and relatives request the reader to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at Christ the King Parish, Green Meadows Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on Wednesday, February 18, 2004 at the La Loma Cemetery.

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MIGUEL M. GARCIA

former President and
Managing Director of the Datacard Division

on February 14, 2004

and extend their condolences to his family and loved ones and join the pious readers in praying for the eternal repose of his soul.

MIGUEL M. GARCIA

Died on February 14, 2004
at the age of 46.

His bereaved family: parents **Dr. RAFAEL GARCIA, Jr.** (†) and **Dra. FRANCISCA MENDOZA GARCIA** (†); wife **MARY ANNE**; children **INNA, MIC-MIC** and **MYKO**; brothers **RAFAEL III, GERALD, GREGORY** (†) and **FRANCISCO**; sisters **SUSANA, ANNE MARIE**, and **MA. EMILIA**; sisters-in-law, brothers-in-law, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His body lies in state at the Lumbang Chapel, Funeraria Paz, Manila Memorial Park, Sucat Rd., Parañaque.

His remains will be cremated at 2:00 p.m. on Thursday, February 19, 2004. Mass at 3:00 p.m. will follow at the Manila Memorial Park Chapel, Sucat Rd., Parañaque.

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NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the application of PNOC ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION with office address at Energy Center, Merritt Road Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila for registration with the Board of Investments under Book I of the Omnibus Investments Code of 1987, otherwise known as E.O. 226, as Amended, as New Operator of Geothermal Power Plant (53.83 MW Northern Negros Geothermal Project) with project site at the Mailum, Bago City, Negros Occidental has been officially accepted on February 11, 2004.

Any person with valid objections to or pertinent comments on the above-mentioned application may file his/her objection, in writing under oath, with the BOI within one (1) week from the date of this publication.

Issued this 11th day of February 2004.

(Sgd.) **FRANCISCO C. CHAVEZ**
Director
Project Evaluation and Registration Department

(PDI--Feb. 18, 2004)

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Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
Intramuros, Manila

DEPARTMENT ORDER NO. 40-B-03

AMENDING THE IMPLEMENTING RULES OF BOOK V OF THE LABOR CODE OF THE PHILIPPINES

Section 1. The Rules mentioned in the following sections pertain to Book V of the Rules and Regulations Implementing the Labor Code of the Philippines, as amended by Department Order No. 40-03.

Section 2. Section 1 (i), Rule 1 is hereby amended as follows:

> "(i) Chartered Local" refers to a labor organization in the private sector operating at the enterprise level that acquired legal personality through registration with the Regional Office in accordance with Rule III, Section 2-E of these Rules."

Section 3. Section 2 (E), Rule III is hereby amended as follows:

> "A duly-registered federation or national union may directly create a chartered local by submitting to the Regional Office two (2) copies of the following:
>
> (a) A charter certificate issued by the federation or national union indicating the creation or establishment of the local/chapter;
>
> (b) The names of the local/chapter's officers, their addresses, and the principal office of the local/chapter; and
>
> (c) The local/chapter's constitution and by-laws, provided that where the local/chapter's constitution and by-laws is the same as that of the federation or national union, this fact shall be indicated accordingly.
>
> All the foregoing supporting requirements shall be certified under oath by the Secretary or the Treasurer of the local/chapter and attested by its President."

Section 4. All chartered locals duly-registered prior to the effectivity of this amendatory issuance shall maintain their legitimate status, with all rights and obligations appurtenant thereto.

Section 5. The foregoing rules shall take effect two weeks after completion of publication in one (1) newspaper of general circulation.

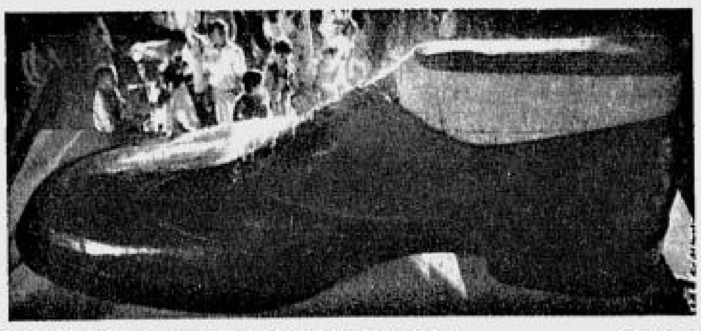
Manila, Philippines: 16 February 2004.

(Sgd.) **PATRICIA A. STO. TOMAS**
Secretary

(PDI – February 18, 2004)

Shoemakers closing shop due to imports

By Ronnel W. Domingo



MARIKINA'S pride: the world's biggest shoe. PDI PHOTO

BETWEEN 60 percent and 70 percent of local shoe makers in the country have closed shop due to the flooding of cheap imports in the local market, an industry official said yesterday.

Johnny Gaudia, public relations officer of the Samahan ng Magsasapatos sa Pilipinas (SMP), said that in Marikina City alone—considered the country's shoe-making capital, the number of shoe makers dropped from at least 1,000 to about 260.

Gaudia said he had no data on hand for the entire industry.

The SMP official said the attrition was mainly due to the flooding of imports that were valued way below their actual costs.

He said data from the National Statistics Office showed that in 2002 more than 100 million pairs of imported shoes, mainly from China, came in last year.

"These imports cost about P700 a pair but they were declared at only P40 each," Gaudia said. "It is not only the shoemakers who are losing money because of this, but also the government."

"Instead of collecting duties of P140 for each pair (or P14 billion for 100 million pairs), the government earned only P8 per pair (or P800 million)," he added.

With such pricing, Gaudia said local manufacturers' chances to compete in the market become slimmer and slimmer.

"Last year, we requested a tariff rate of 35 percent for imported shoes. But Executive Order 241 provided for a rate of only 15 percent," he said.

Issued on Oct. 2, 2003, EO 241 covers rates for 373 tariff headings on finished products. The order became effective last Nov. 17 and the rates would hold until 2005.

Gaudia said a 15-percent tariff was not enough since imports were being declared much below their value.

Gaudia was a panelist at a forum hosted by the Fair Trade Alliance, which said the country was still reeling from the negative effects of unilateral and accelerated trade liberalization.

FTA lead convenor Wigberto Tañada said EO 241, while increasing certain tariffs at "marginal increments" of between 1 and 5 percent, substantially retained the country's low tariff regime.

Tañada said 80 percent of tariffs remained at 0-5 percent.

"Those who drafted (this order) have no clear vision of how to strengthen the domestic industry ... They are just hoping that somehow a liberalized market would usher in big and modern investors from overseas who will do the industrialization process ... for the Philippines," the former lawmaker said.

Gov't slashes duties on PUB, PUJ spare parts

THE DEPARTMENT of Trade and Industry yesterday said transport fare increases could be avoided as it had approved the implementing guidelines for the reduction of import duties on frequently used spare and replacement parts for jeepneys and buses.

Trade Secretary Cesar Purisima said in a statement that the rules that would govern Executive Order 243 were approved by the Departments of Finance and of Transportation and Communications as well as the National Economic and Development Authority.

EO 243 provides for the temporary reduction or suspension of import duties on automotive parts such as air compressors and inner tubes.

"Further increases in fares could be prevented through this program," Purisima said. "This also lessens the impact of the high costs of repair and maintenance that burden the owners of public vehicles."

He said EO 243 would bring savings to jeepney and bus operators since they would be able to save on duties and value-added taxes, and also avoid additional costs from middlemen.

Operators of public utility jeepneys and buses are qualified to import their spare parts at low tariffs for six months under the program.

The official said the joint administrative order on the implementing rules provided the following procedures for application and requirements on participants:

- Certification from the DOTC-LTFRB (Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board) for the operator or member of the association and/or DOTC-Office of Transport Cooperatives for accredited operator or member of a cooperative;
- import authority from the Bureau of Import Services of the DTI;
- assessment and release of imported spare parts from the Bureau of Customs and
- monitoring of the importation by the accredited transport group to ensure that only the authorized volume of articles were imported.

The DTI said that according to transport groups, 40 percent of their operating costs account for fuel, tires and spare parts.

"To mitigate the impart of oil price increases, we have adopted a temporary non-oil related measure in reducing the cost of repair and maintenance for public transport vehicles," Purisima said. *Ronnel W. Domingo*

Doctorate degree conferred on JG Summit chair

JG Summit Holdings Inc. chair emeritus John Gokongwei Jr. was recently conferred by his alma mater, the University of San Carlos in Cebu, with a Doctorate of Science in Business and Enterprise Development *honoris causa*.

USC honored Gokongwei with this doctorate degree for "the upliftment of the lives of the people through his business enterprise and his share in making our world a better place to live."

"I was molded in the playing fields, classrooms and chapels of San Carlos," said the taipan in his speech. He specified discipline, love for learning and a Christian education as the three values that he imbibed during his stay at the university.

Gokongwei has been a staunch advocate of charity and the development of future leaders through education.

SUCCESSFUL PANAGBENGA FESTIVAL

Effective marketing does it for Baguio

By Vincent Cabreza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

FEATURE

BAGUIO CITY—Tacloban City tourism officer Gerald Ligan came here in February last year to find out how the Baguio flower festival—a festival that had no cultural, anthropological or religious antecedent—was besting his more historically significant Pintados Festival.

Between 1997 and 2002, the Baguio festival raked in approximately P20 million in revenue for its various enterprising participants.

The Pintados feast, for its part, makes barely a fraction of that income, Ligan says.

The people behind the Baguio flower festival or "Panagbenga" (Kankanaey term for "season for blossoming") have no easy answers for Ligan. This is probably because the government never calculated the true cost of this festival.

"We spent no more than P2 million to set up the original concept in 1996 and to execute it in 1997," said lawyer Damaso Bangaoet, former president of the defunct John Hay Poro Point Development Corp. (JPDC).

Parade of Roses

The government leased out Camp John Hay to a developer in 1997. But faced with a community that was hostile to John Hay's development, Bangaoet and his colleagues conceptualized the Baguio festival as a community-linking venture, little realizing "the kind of monster" they would spawn.

"John Hay was being developed at the time when tourism in Baguio was low. The 1990 Luzon earthquake not only destroyed Baguio's infrastructure, it also tarnished the city's reputation as a safe place," Bangaoet said.

EVEN plastic flowers can be found along with the real things during the festival. PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

"We were frustrated. Kennon Road was badly eroded. It took eight full hours just to reach us from Metro Manila. Tagaytay City was getting Baguio's tourists," he said.

Baguio, however, was an American-built city. Most other towns have a Spanish, Catholic or Muslim ancestry from which a fiesta or celebration can be designed.

THE 'CREW' that started the yearly Baguio City Flower Festival, led by retired JPDC president and former John Hay Management Corp. executive vice president Damaso Bangaoet (center). PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

So Bangaoet turned to the United States. Inspired by the Pasadena Rose Parade in California, he decided to design a Cordillera version of that famous floral parade.

Christopher Guzman, the man who led the team of employees and volunteers behind the first series of festivals, said the first Panagbenga was engineered as a moving pictograph of Igorot heritage, highlighted by the native dress and cultural icons of the Ibaloi and Kankanaeys in Baguio.

Festival-related activities were spread throughout February. These include a flower parade, a producers' market and the closing off to motorists of Session Road, the city's major thoroughfare, to give way to open-air restaurants and other entertainment facilities.

Community venture

Fran Moredo, executive vice president of the John Hay Management Corp. (JHMC), which replaced JPDC, said the government spent no more than P3.12 million in 1997 to launch the festival.

Guzman said more than half of that amount was used to ferry Metro Manila-based reporters and television crew to Camp John Hay.

"The government felt that the festival's success relied on good promotions," he explained.

JPDC employees Guzman, Edward Tenefrancia, Vangie Domingo, Vina Tandoc, Lito Aguinaldo, Jun de los Reyes, Edgar Makiling, Manny Pucay, Eldy Lositano, Jun Dejo, Luz Nigos, Marylou Castillo, Joy Pagaduan, Romy Dongle and Eric Picart made up the official work force of the JPDC-run festivals.

"This crew worked after hours sewing costumes and hammering makeshift props and traffic barriers for a street-dancing and float parade. We had makeshift kitchens set up because we virtually lived in John Hay. We went to work at 8 a.m. and stayed up until 4 a.m. the following day working on costumes," Guzman said.

Marian Catedral and Federico Alquiros led the team from the developers, the Camp John Hay Development Corp. (CJHDevco), which actively marketed the festival to the media.

Gillian Cortes, former CJHDevco vice president, said the developer ended up managing the producers' market every year until 2002.

Politicized

Guzman said the festival's crew started to worry when wide publicity started to draw an average of 100,000 tourists yearly from 1998 to 2000.

This led to some criticisms that the festival was harming Baguio's water resources and caused massive traffic jams. Even politics tried to ride on the Panagbenga's success.

In 2003, Mayor Bernardo Vergara formally assumed control of the festival and controversies promptly surfaced. The use of banners adorned with the images of three top Baguio officials was widely criticized.

Guzman said the recent controversies related to the staging of the festival were apparently fueled by unanswered questions about Panagbenga's success.

Moredo noted that the JPDC started to reduce its subsidy to the festival, from P3.8 million in 1998, to P2.6 million in 1999, P2.1 million in 2000, P1.79 million in 2001 and P1.5 million in 2002.

Contemporary ideas

Bangaoet, who continued to steer the festival as executive vice president of the JHMC until 2002, said in an earlier interview that corporate sponsors simply made up for the logistical needs of the event.

But while government subsidies diminished, the festival did not lose its large pool of unpaid workers.

Guzman said the festival's "genius" could probably be credited to the volunteers who worked quietly.

"We were surprised by that. The festival crew was busy making costumes when some students went to John Hay to offer their services. They told us that they wanted to join the creative process," Guzman said.

He said the crew welcomed them, and allowed them to inject new ideas into the festival.

The contemporary street-dancing parades are now infused with Brazilian carnival atmosphere and the pomp of the most glamorous gay pride parades.

BIR, PSE to share database on brokers' dealings

By Michelle V. Remo

THE BUREAU of Internal Revenue and the Philippine Stock Exchange have agreed to share online database of stock transactions. The move is expected to improve the monitoring of the brokers' compliance with their tax obligations.

According to Revenue Commissioner Guillermo Parayno Jr., the tie-up with the PSE is one of the tax measures to be undertaken this year to help the BIR hit its P477-billion collection target.

Deputy Commissioner Kim Henares said the tie-up would allow the BIR to link with the exchange's computer system. This will enable the BIR to access information on the amount of transactions undertaken by the brokers.

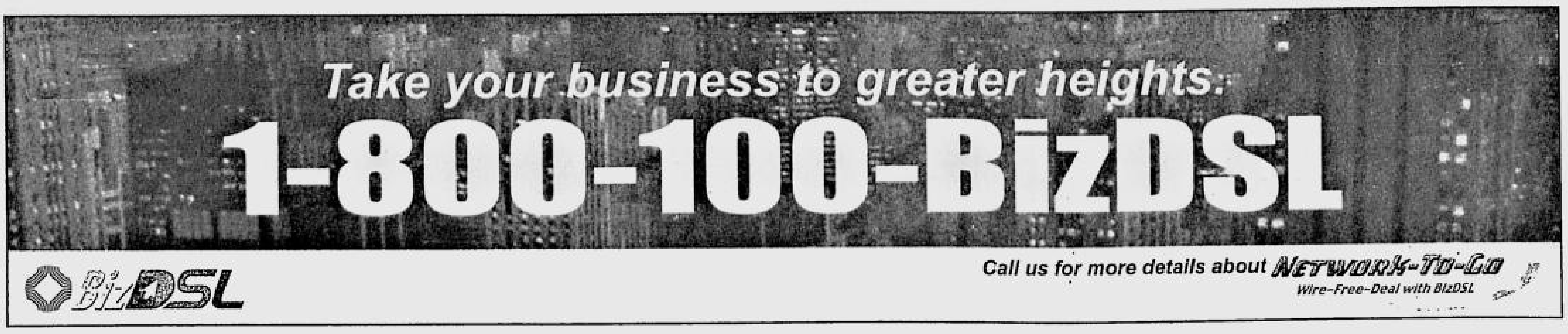
She said the move to link the computer system of the BIR and the PSE was an offshoot of a memorandum of agreement signed earlier by the two parties. The MOA states that the PSE should share with the BIR information on stock transactions so that the latter may determine the tax liabilities of brokers.

"We had a MOA before, but we were having a hard time then because we had to monitor the transactions manually. By linking of our computer systems, the BIR may determine the volume of transactions faster and on a regular basis," said Henares in an interview.

She added that with the online link, the BIR is expecting to achieve a 100-percent compliance among brokers with the payment of stock transaction and documentary stamp taxes.

In the past, brokers were said to have not fully complied with their tax obligations, partly due to the inability of the BIR to strictly monitor their compliance.

"This move is a big step toward ensuring that people pay the right taxes and on time. We expect to come up with more measures this year," said Henares.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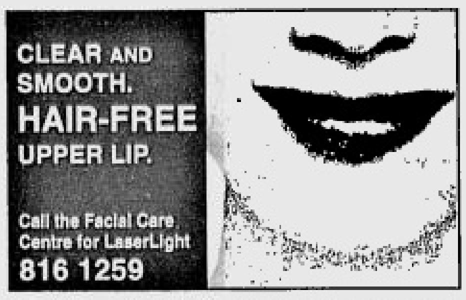
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GLITTERBALL. Mariah Carey's sizzling surprise

VOTE FOR ME. GMA look-alike Siti Nuhariza of Malaysia

MR. SUAVES. Parokya ni Edgar with Vanness Wu

MTV TRIO. Simon of Blue with VJ Denise in a YSL dress and VJ KC Montero, who caused a commotion among fans when he came out of a limo

LONG LOST BRO. Yaparazzi with Vanness Wu

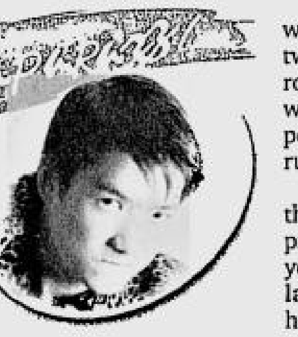
YO! Michelle Yeoh

STRIPTEASE. [illegible] Rajo Laurel with the Pussycat Dolls

SUGABABES. Keisha, Heidi and Mutya

LOVE IS IN THE AIR. Banjo Albano and VJ Sarah Meier's new boyfriend

Fallen angels and lingerie at the MTV Asia Awards


Tim Yap

SINGAPORE—"Pussycat Dolls" in bold neon lights—that was the first thing that popped onto viewers' eyes the minute the MTV Asia Awards 2004 started.

When the show was off to a "Cabaret" start with blondes and brunettes doing a striptease, I couldn't believe I was in the Lion City. "I think I need to change my shorts," host **Vanness Wu** of F4 fame (again, I am not the official F4 chronicler) confessed on air. And what a precedent it was—with host **Michelle Branch** wearing a barely-there pink top that went down to her navel, revealing half of her breasts, but not racy enough to pull off a Janet.

"**Janet Jackson** is in the audience!" the Indian VJ shouted. The crowd cheered. "Oh, sorry—it's just a guy with a nipple ring!"

Later, quirky video clips of fallen angels trying their luck on earth (alongside the Valentine's theme—the trophies were Cupid statuettes with golden sashes that doubled as CD players, made by sponsor Philips perhaps) would amuse audiences in between commercials.

The first presenter was the Taiwanese boy band 5566. In their best Chinese-accented English, they said, "And the winner is..."—then they all screamed—"G String!"—and exposed a lingerie, where the name of the winner was stated. Another presenter, Irish crooner **Derek McDonald**, even wore the lingerie atop his jeans, to the delight of the 7,000-strong audience that had gathered from all over Asia at the Singapore Indoor Stadium to witness this event in its three-year existence.

The regional awards were given out first. One by one, Asia's top acts were given their due recognition (as Favorite Artist). Pop diva **Mariah Carey** got hearts all fired up when she made a surprise appearance to accept a Lifetime Achievement Award while Linkin Park clinched two awards for favorite rock act and favorite video, while Blue won favorite pop act for the second year running.

"Parokya Ni Edgar" won the Favorite Artist (Philippines) award, beating two-year winner **Regine Velasquez**. "Regine is nice. I hope Regine would not get mad at us, " said Dindin of Parokya. Other countries like Hong Kong (**Sammi Cheng**), Malaysia (GMA lookalike **Siti Nurhaliza**) and Singapore (**Stefanie Sun**) had their winners for the third straight year—which goes to show how Asians are really such creatures of habit.

New breed

The new winners, though, present a new breed of what is to come for Asia, and hopefully, the world. **BoA**, winner of Most Influential Artist and Favorite Artist (Korea), may soon be a hot act all over Asia, with Japan signing her up. Even non-nominee Tata

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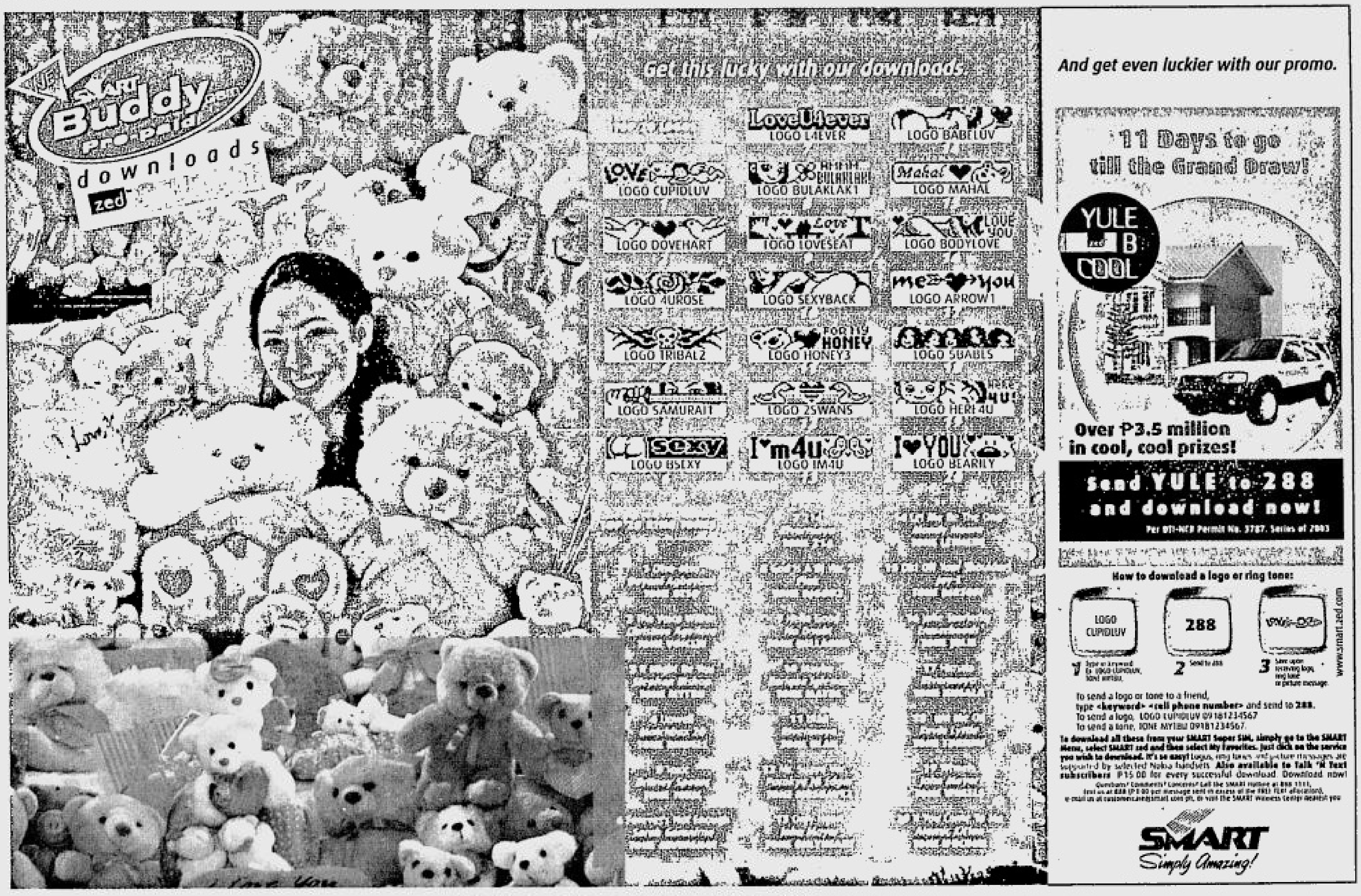
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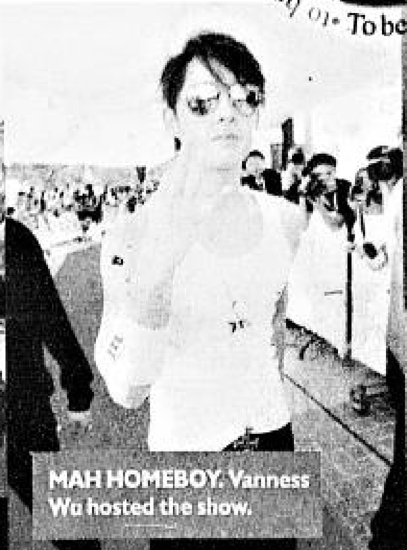
GO WEST, GO EAST. 5566 on the red carpet

PHOTOS: TIM YAP AND MAUI REYES

TIME Asia cover girl and pop star A Mei from Taiwan


MAH HOMEBOY. Vanness Wu hosted the show.

MY BELLE. Michelle Branch reveals more.

BRITNEY OF ASIA? BoA is soon to be Asia's hottest.

Fallen angels and lingerie at the MTV Asia Awards

CHINA chap Pu Shu after a nuclear blast

ANTI-BRITNEY AND CHRISTINA. Stacie Orrico

SIMPLE Plan's Pierre wonders why they didn't win.

From page C1

Young of Thailand just got signed up with Columbia (the one who developed **Beyonce**, **Celine Dion**, among others) for a global development deal.

Winners and losers aside, I think what the MTV Asia Awards have done is open the floodgates for Asian talent. Artist collaborations, like Siti Nurhaliza of Malaysia singing onstage with **Gareth Gates** of the UK, and **Stacie Orrico** jamming with Malaysian rap group **Too Phat** and Singapore's Urban Exchange, were a definite treat. "Seeing more artists work together is something very inspiring," said new pop artist **Javier**.

"We should show the world what Asians can do. We want to bring Asian music to the world music scene—we are the new Asian youth. If Japan buys Chinese music, then hopefully in the future Westerners will buy Chinese music, too," said Too Phat and Urban Exchange. They don't have to worry about the Philippine market though, as we have embraced Chinese music all too well.

Years ago, I just ignored the other artists and focused my eyes on the Filipino artists and the global acts. F4 is one of those breakthrough acts that have shattered the Cantopop stereotype and broken the language barrier. I'm sure there is more to come. Especially now as Asia and the world get smaller, I won't be surprised in the future to see Korean music being played on our local airwaves, or Filipino acts performing in a sold-out concert in Singapore, with more than just Filipinos filling the audience.

Even the acts from the West are learning more about Asia. When boyband Blue first went to the Asia Awards, they weren't aware of countries like Malaysia and Indonesia. "I've never been good with geography, so it's been a continuing education for me," said Lee of Blue.

Highlight

A sure highlight for me was when **APL** (short for **Alan Pineda Lindo**, from Pampanga) of Black Eyed Peas went onstage and announced proudly, "I'm Filipino, so for my brothers in the Philippines, *kamusta kayo diyan?*" **Buwi** of Parokya ni Edgar demonstrated Pinoy pride by wearing our flag, embroidered on his black tank top. Attaboy!

Rivermaya's **Rico Blanco** put it best when he said, "I'm so proud of people like APL of Black Eyed Peas and **Mutya** of Sugababes who haven't forgotten their roots despite their success. Bottom line: It's really about a true love for music and the desire to make people smile."

I got a kick out of listening to Chinese rap, with Vanness "You'll-see-more-hip-hop-in-my-music" Wu's "homeboys" Machi (which means "brotherhood")—Oriental Marky Marks raising the roof on the Asian punters. "I guess we're the only ones who do hip-hop—real hip-hop." And they've collaborated with **Missy Elliot**, too.

I got goosebumps watching Indian pop princess **Isha Kopikar** add color to the stage with a bevy of Indian dancers, and Thai idol "Bird" **Thongchai McIntyre** belt it out with other Thai singers.

Backstage at the press room, an "American Idol" scenario prevailed, with the artists trying to impress the media with their antics. Some of them sang, danced, did acrobatics and kicked each other in the balls just to make an impression. "There's only two kinds of music—the good and the bad. We're... okay," said Simple Plan, who was jokingly sourgraping backstage on their non-victory.

Stacie Orrico, upon leaving the photo room, complained about her heels and proceeded to take them off, changing to slippers as she walked toward her dressing room. Singapore security was so strict that I saw **Frank Brown**, MTV president, having a hard time entering the press room on his way to the sponsor's cocktails. **Stephanie Sun** confessed that her boyfriend wanted to watch the show, but didn't have a ticket to enter. Poor guy.

Christina Aguilera, who looks like a young **Liza Minelli**, appeared on video to accept her favorite artist award. People backstage cheered when her name was announced, winning over **Britney**. They changed their mood and booed when Mariah was called for her award. Aah, these divas.

Michelle Yeoh presented an award to the late HK superstar **Anita Mui**. Yeoh received an award for herself, the Asian Film Award, for her contribution to the Asian film industry.

The show ended on a high note, with the multi-ethnic rap crew Black Eyed Peas (who went to Singapore fresh from the Grammy's), dazzling spectators with "Where is the Love?" (They're coming to Manila on May 22.) How apt for a Valentine's night. When I asked them the same question backstage, they answered, "We got lotsa lovin' from the crowd."

Talkin' about lovin', the after-party was full of it. At the penthouse bar Equinox, flirtation was all around as more than artist collaborations were formed. But that, my dears, is another story.

THE WINNERS

Favorite Artist Philippines: **Parokya ni Edgar**
Favorite Artist Mainland China: **Pu Shu**
Favorite Artist Hong Kong: **Sammi Cheng**
Favorite Artist India: **Abhijeet**
Favorite Artist Indonesia: **Audy**
Favorite Artist Korea: **BoA**
Favorite Artist Malaysia: **Siti Nurhaliza**
Favorite Artist Singapore: **Stefanie Sun**
Favorite Artist Taiwan: **A*Mei**
Favorite Artist Thailand: **"Bird" Thongchai McIntyre**

Favorite Male Artist: **Gareth Gates**
Favorite Female Artist: **Christina Aguilera**
Favorite Pop Act: **Blue**
Favorite Rock Act: **Linkin Park**
Favorite Video: **Linkin Park**
Favorite Breakthrough Artist: **t.A.T.u.**
The Asian Film Award: **Michelle Yeoh**
The Inspiration Award: **Anita Mui**

MTV Whatever guys

CHAMPAGNE CHUG. Dude from Black Eyed Peas with hot Asian date

ONWARD to world domination. Thai beauty Tata Young at the after-party

MODEL MANIA. Sarah Meier and Joey Mead

WILL.I.AM of Black Eyed Peas

RICO Blanco with Mutya of Sugababes

MTV TEAM. Robert Quebral, Georgette Tengco and Miguel Santos

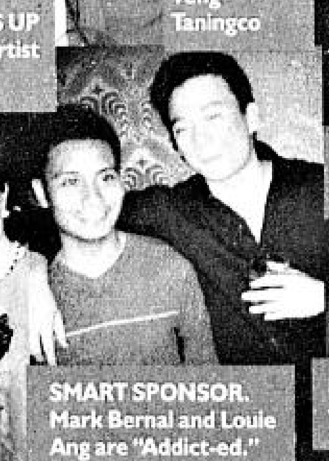
THUMBS UP for new artist Javier

JAG mover Veng Taningco

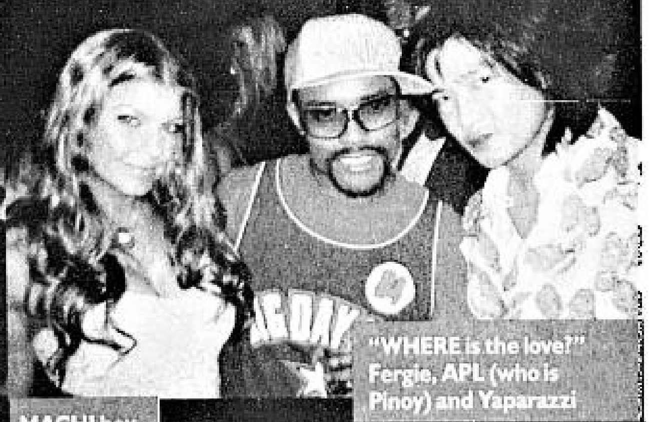
FAVORITE male artist Gareth Gates, who beat Justin Timberlake for the prize, with one of his dates

ALTERNATIVE NATION. Kathy Alejar, Vince Dizon and Rod Nepomuceno

BE SEEN. P&G's Monique and MTV's Jocelle at Equinox


SMART SPONSOR. Mark Bernal and Louie Ang are "Addict-ed."

LIBERTY X girls with Blue boy


"WHERE is the love?" Fergie, APL (who is Pinoy) and Yaparazzi

MACHI boy rapper from Taiwan

BLUE, blue, blue... her date is from Blue.

RIVERMAYA's Mark Escueta with Mutya

2BU! AT MTV. Maui Reyes and VJ Utt, coming soon to Manila

WHERE'S IGAN? Audrey Carpio, Yeng Lim and Vicky Ledesma

PINOY PRIDE. Febe with Buwi of Parokya

Luxurious spa treatment at home

Vanity Fare

Lora Gabol

ALTHOUGH people probably think I am vain, there's still a part of me that wants nothing more than a bar of soap and a bottle of shampoo for my beauty regimen. I guess there just comes a point when, quite ironically, the entire "relaxing" ritual of pampering in a spa—lying on a bed for a couple of hours for a scrub and a massage, wrapping yourself in goop from some unknown body of water—gets tiring.

It's not that I don't like the Cleopatra treatment, luxuriating in a tub of fragrant oils and exotic flowers. What gets me thinking twice about setting foot in a spa are the hours that I could've spent doing "more important stuff." That and another *kikay* (or is it anti-*kikay*?) confession: I can't stand some stranger's hand rubbing down my (naked) body, not for perverted reasons but simply because I can get annoyingly, noisily ticklish, and I find that this can only be either insulting or distracting—not a very good thing.

I was about to continue my quest for beauty, half-heartedly making spa appointments—I had to at least look the part of a beauty columnist—until I came across an amazing line of spa products, all lovingly concocted by hand! Home Spa may soon become every spa-loving girl's best friend.

Swept in a nostalgic haze (I used to make my own beauty "recipes" with mashed fruits and oatmeal, usually ending up with a mess), I excitedly indulged in my first taste of Home Spa heaven—a three-step foot treatment with the Strawberry Milkshake line (two-thumbs-and-ten-toes-up rating! You might have read about it in a previous column)—in the privacy of my own bathroom.

Hooked

After admiring my smooth and berry-scented tootsies, I knew I was hooked. I had to try their other offerings and, so far, I have not been disappointed.

Easily addictive with their yummy flavors and delicious scents, Home Spa products aren't all sugar and spice. The complete line of bath and body essentials was formulated to keep skin healthy while using the most natural ingredients Mother Nature has to offer—no chemicals here! The mild formulas are very relaxing, true must-haves for any girl (or guy) wanting to de-stress.

All products are readily available, can be used in the convenience of your own home, and are very reasonably priced (ranging from P80-P350). Try these hair, face and body treats, and get addicted!

Moisturizing Lip Balm (P80). This is, by far, one of the best lip balms I have tried. The texture is light and doesn't leave a sticky mess on your fingers or lips. Use just enough to coat your kisser—it works as a light gloss, too. I love how it plumps up fine lines on your lips, and am absolutely hooked on the tingly, minty-cool sensation that comes right after applying it. Super cheap, too. Available in Cherry and Peppermint.

Honey Bliss Bath Gel (P100). If there's anything I can never give up during bath time, it's a luxurious shower gel. Anything else and I don't feel as clean and refreshed. This one from Home Spa became an instant favorite. It scrubs away rough patches (use a bath lily!) and leaves skin soft and glowing—literally! Rich with honey's moisturizing and silkening properties, it doesn't feel like you have to rinse thrice to get rid of all traces of the product. Great news for Go Nuts Donuts lovers—the Iced Lemon smells like fresh glazed donuts. Believe it!

Smooth and Silky Olive and Honey Hair Therapy (P130). A sure winner among those with chemically treated or naturally dry strands, the olive oil and honey in this sweet-smelling (everything smells great!) hair treatment really boosts moisture and shine—and costs a mere fraction of what you'd pay for high-end salon treatments. Apply an ample amount, leave on for 20 minutes or longer, and rinse off for bouncier, silkier locks.

Clarifying Milk and Green Tea Facial Mask (P150). For blemished and breakout-prone skin, once-a-week treatment with this fresh facial mask can do wonders for your complexion. Green Tea purifies and improves skin's defenses against harsh environmental elements and pollutants, while Milk exfoliates and helps lighten pigmentation such as pimple scars and freckles.

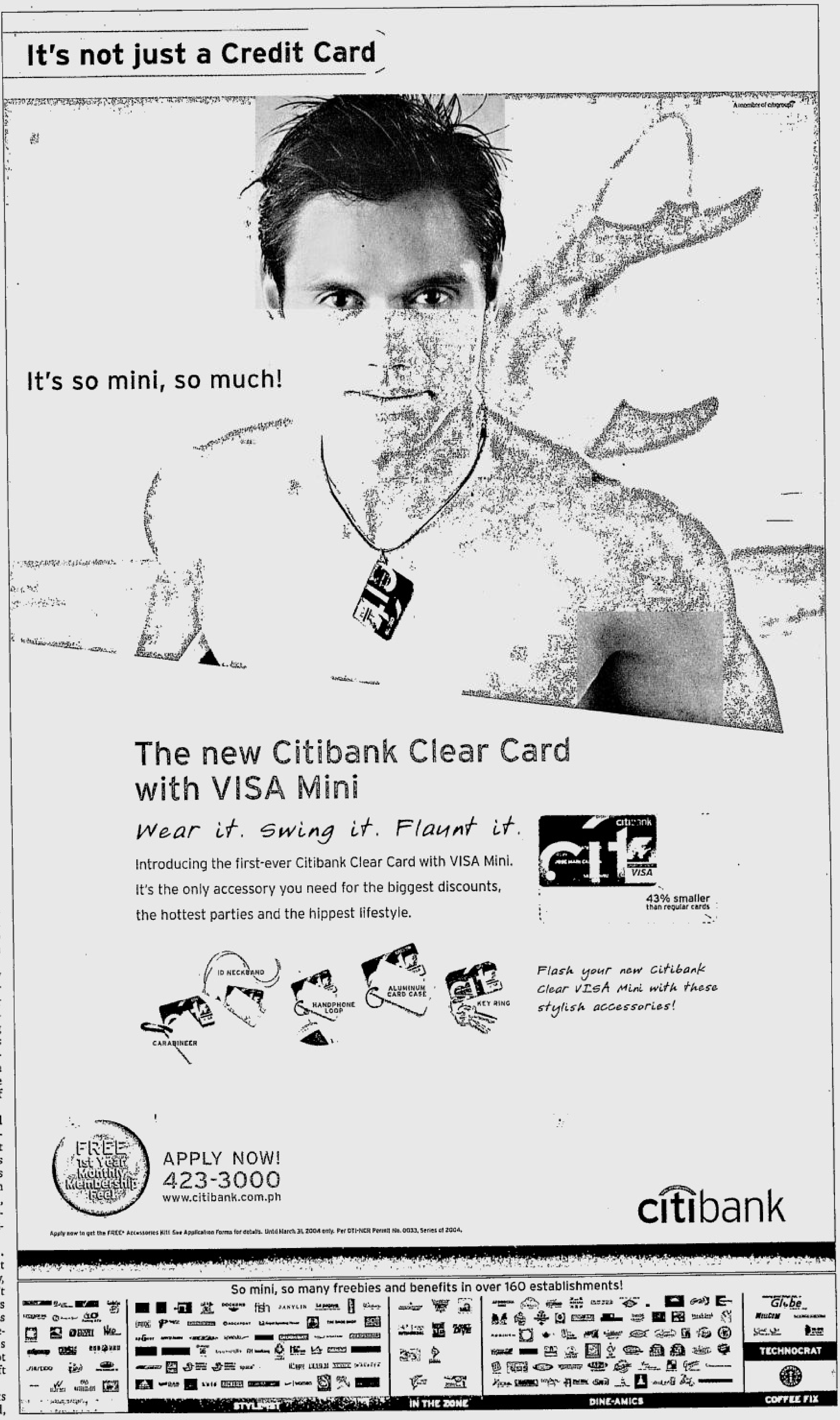
Exfoliating Foot Glow Scrub (P100). Currently my favorite foot loot, this salt scrub with essential oils gets rid of dry, crusty skin on my feet. The grains don't scratch, and the whole scrubbing process is actually relaxing! Soak your tired tootsies in the Softening Milk Foot Bath (P100) before exfoliating, and slather on a generous amount of Deep Moisturizing Olive Foot Butter afterwards for unbelievably soft feet.

Try the different tea-based products (Green Tea/Vanilla, Jasmine/Almond, Chamomile/ Vanilla/ Almond-Basil/ Toffee/Rosemary/ Coco-Pandan, etc.), fruit-based varieties (Strawberry, Mango, Melon, Lemon, Pineapple, Banana, Orange) or the bean/nut combinations (Mocha, Vanilla, Chocolate, Almond), depending on your needs (nourishing, relaxing, moisturizing, invigorating, etc.)

Order Home Spa products from Marge Gabat (0920-2935057/ 4341126), or e-mail home_spa@lycos.com. The products are also available—and used—at Gloss Designer Nails Eastwood; Posh Nails, San Juan; Nail Spa, Makati; and Nail Tropics Eastwood.

E-mail the author at pdi_vanityfare@hotmail.com.

HOME Spa product line



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NO PLACE FOR SINGLES. Couples show their passion in this 10-second kiss.

Sweetly setting world record

By Vanessa Arellano Doctor
2bU! Correspondent

5,122 couples! 5,122! Yes, folks. The Philippines is in the news again and not for wretched politics or serial kidnap-for-ransom cases.

The country made news by breaking the Guinness Book record for the most number of couples kissing! The previous record holder, Chile, only had a total of 4,445 couples.

Critics panned the concept when it was announced and many people were pessimistic. Who would ever think the Philippines, a predominantly Catholic nation, will consider such a "monstrosity"? Of course, there was nothing monstrous about the occasion except perhaps the large turnout—more or less 50,000 warm bodies.

Did it beat the crowds in the Edsa events? Probably. Skimpily clad or covered from head to foot, people of all ages, from different walks of life, endured the pushing and the heat to witness or participate in the record-breaking affair.

...WHILE these lovebirds do it the wild way.

PHOTOS: JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

KIM Atienza and wife demonstrate the "sweet" type of kissing...

Traffic along Baywalk was slow but moving, thanks to Mayor Lito Atienza and the city government of Manila. People were everywhere!

Sentimental, competitive

Filipinos are reputed to be natural-born lovers. The amazing mass of supporters of CloseUp's Lovapalooza Kiss for the Record proved that they are also suckers for mush. The success of the event confirmed the Filipinos' competitive nature.

As CloseUp brand manager Oscar Reyes said, "Lovapalooza is proof that we Filipinos can be united under one positive goal and Valentine's Day is the perfect time for all of us to shoot for the stars!" The record-breaking kissing was followed by a fantastic laser lights show and a 5-10-minute fireworks display.

It was a fitting way to cap the end of 10 seconds when 5,122 couples willingly kissed to make their country proud.

E-mail the author at ness_doctor@yahoo.com

Not dirty talk

The Institute for Social Studies and Action has come up with two books for adolescents and adults that talk about safe sex and more

By Jasmine W. Payo

WHILE sex education is still under constant debate in our country, schools abroad now conduct special lectures on sex, especially this month of love.

The premise behind it is simple: With thousands spending on chocolates, flowers, romantic dinners and gifts on V-day, an atmosphere of romance is created that can tempt young couples to have sex. Thus, it is better to provide them the right information on safe sex.

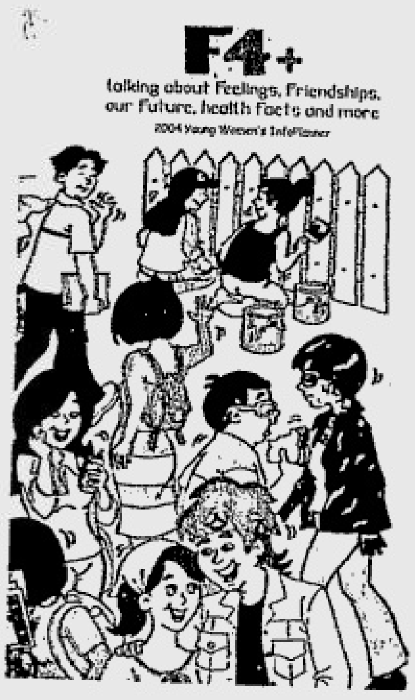
There is, of course, the argument of some people that sex education encourages young people to engage in pre-marital sex. But Malyn Ando, program coordinator of the Institute for Social Studies and Action (ISSA), disagrees.

"It's a standard reaction from other sectors that we're encouraging the youth to have sex. It doesn't mean that if we give information, they'll do it. It discredits young people [by implying] that they can't think on their own. That they can't make their own decisions," she says.

Older sister

Discussing sex is rarely easy. ISSA, a non-profit, non-government organization, knows this very well. For 20 years now, it has been conducting public education and publishing materials on sexual and reproductive health for women and the youth.

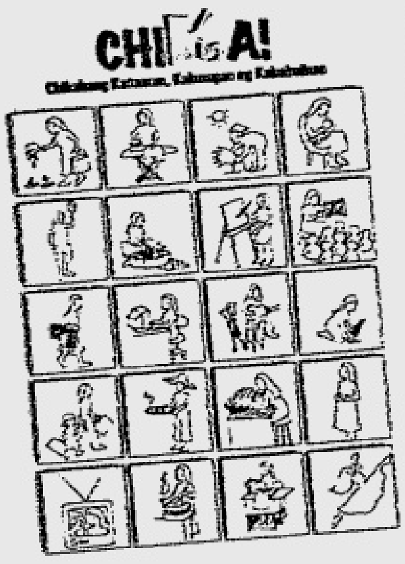
ISSA is composed mostly of women who come from different backgrounds such as psychology, education, community development and mass communication. Though the group has earned praises, it has also had its share of criticisms because of some of the controversial topics it tackles.


F4+
talking about Feelings, Friendships, our Future, health Facts and more
2004 Young Women's InfoPlanner

Recently, ISSA released "F4+: Talking about Feelings, Friendships, Our Future, Health Facts and More" and "Chika (Chikahang Katawan, Kalusugan ng Kababaihan)."

"F4+" is a practical infoplanner for young women. "It's for adolescents and teens. The target age is between 10-18 years old. And it's meant to be just like an older sister talking to them," says Ando.

Indeed, "F4+" is far from your cold, complex biology book. Written in English (and sometimes in the now familiar text lingo), topics include the physical changes one will experience during adolescence, menstruation, body image, sexual relations, abstinence, contraceptives, homosexuality, early pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections and violence against women.


CHIKA!
Chikahang Katawan, Kalusugan ng Kababaihan

Aside from providing helpful facts and candid illustrations, "F4+" also offers sound advice for the youth. Some examples: on teen pregnancy ("Don't go through it alone. Talk with someone about your situation to help relieve your anxiety and plot out a plan"); on homosexuality and coming out ("Only you can decide for yourself with whom you want to discuss your sexuality. Choose the ones whom you feel are the most open-minded and trustworthy"); on sexual relations ("Sex is not love. Don't confuse the two. You can love someone and not be ready for sex").

At the end of the infoplanner, there's also a directory that lists teen centers, women and health centers, legal assistance and clinics.

Ando says that teens can read "F4+" by themselves, but advises that it can also be helpful for pre-teens to read it together with a parent or a teacher.

Clear and concise

While "Chika" also features women's sexual and reproductive issues, it features more in-depth discussions. Written in Filipino, it has topics relevant to both adolescents and adults. At the end of the booklet, it also has a directory of health centers and other useful contacts.

"'Chika' has a broader coverage [since] it features the health concerns in every life stage of a woman. All reproductive issues are pressing concerns, so we came up with this for women to have the right information," notes Ando.

Both publications are written in a clear and concise style. They're easy to understand, and can even prompt discussions about sex between parents and kids, or teachers and students.

It's expected though that some people will frown on these works. But Ando stresses that eventually Filipinos should learn to deal with the difficult reality of sex and the youth.

"We're not making up the statistics (on the rise of pre-marital sex and early pregnancy)," she says. "We're not telling teenagers what to do. What we want is to provide them with the right information. We're doing this because we want teens to be empowered, to be informed."

"F4+" costs P75 per copy, "Chika" at P40 per copy. Call the Institute for Social Studies and Action at 4367017; fax 9216170; e-mail issa@pacific.net.ph; website www.issa.org.ph.

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She's wondering if friendship can lead to romance

DEAR Mark and Sep,

I met this guy in the company I used to work at. We got along so well and I dreamt of becoming his girlfriend. When my contract with the company ended, we saw less of one another but we still go out at present.

We've known each other now for six years. I know he sees some girls because he loves to flirt but I think he doesn't have any girlfriend at the moment.

I have feelings for him and I know he cares for me, too.

But I don't know why he can't show his feelings toward me.

How can he court some girls but not me? Can I just invite him for dinner and ask him if we're just friends or if our friendship is heading somewhere because I'm tired of waiting.

Should I ask him that or will I just make a fool of myself?

JULIANA

Niño Mark Sablan
& September Mabino

Go ahead and invite him for supper, and most probably, he will give you a nod. That's because he sees you as a friend and nothing more.

Face it, he'll never give you roses and chocolates as a romantic gesture or steal a snapshot of yours and tuck it under his pillow every time he is set to meet Morpheus. If he ever entertained thoughts about you and him turning lovey-dovey, then he would have courted you years ago. He would have expressed his romantic feelings. You should have felt it. He may care for you and be deeply concerned about your mental health, but that doesn't necessarily mean that he wants to meet you at the altar and give you his surname.

Six years is a lifetime and all he did during that time was court girls or flirt around. You should get the message by now. Stop the waiting and start looking somewhere else for love.

MARK

First of all, in asking why he courts other girls and not you, the answer should already be clear. Boys do what they want to do, that is a fact, and if he never sent you flowers or chocolates after all these years that you've known each other, it's because he never felt like doing so.

Second, girls never reach adulthood without knowing the differences that boys make between girl friends and (potential) girlfriends. Don't let that "pare" commercial feed you illusions—with the opposite sex, it's an almost instantaneous recognition that this girl is special and that girl is just a pal.

I know we've all heard of cases where the guy "suddenly" realizes that the woman of his dreams was right beside him all along, but in those cases, the guy either: a) has been in denial for quite some time that he's attracted to his friend; or b) is settling down, in the literal sense of the word.

Now, in your case, there is a chance that your friend is not yet ready to admit that he has feelings for you. But if I were you, I wouldn't count too much on that chance. After all, you've known the guy for six years already and nothing's still happening.

The best thing you can do now is to enjoy the friendship without expectations or demands. It would be a waste if you turned the relationship into a "love or nothing" issue just because you can't control the other person's feelings. Remaining friends with the guy may not be what you truly want but it still is a very good thing. Now keep that in mind and be open to other possibilities.

SEPTEMBER

E-mail the writers at markandsep@yahoo.com. Chatroom is inviting letter senders to indicate if they want their e-mail address printed so wannabe Marks and Seps out there can get in touch with problematic readers and send in their comments and advice.

LIFESTYLE

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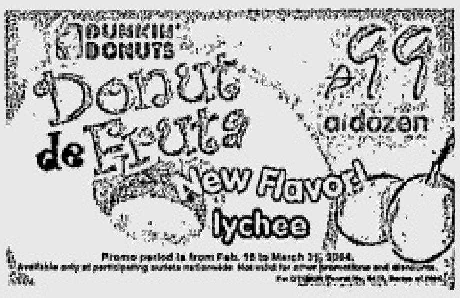
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5 reasons Michelle Branch rocks

"THE SONGS in ["Hotel Paper"] are all about one guy, unfortunately."

By Maui V. Reyes
2bU! Correspondent

"I LOVE the weather here in Singapore!" Michelle gushes as she flops down on one of the Fullerton Hotel's comfy couches. "I hate cold weather."

The record company people refused that we take any pictures of her, and I couldn't understand why. Despite a non-stop 18-hour flight from the States, a jet-lagged Michelle Branch still looks as glamorous as she does in her videos and magazine spreads, even in her head-to-toe black outfit, with bra straps peaking out and all.

"So what questions are we not asking today?" her manager, Jeff Rabhan asks by the door.

"I don't know, they can ask anything," says Michelle, smiling.

She's now sitting in an Indian-sitting position, ready to fire back at any question thrown at her.

"Religion, politics, whatever. That would make it even more interesting," she grins.

And so our conversation with this musical firecracker begins.

5 REASONS/ D3

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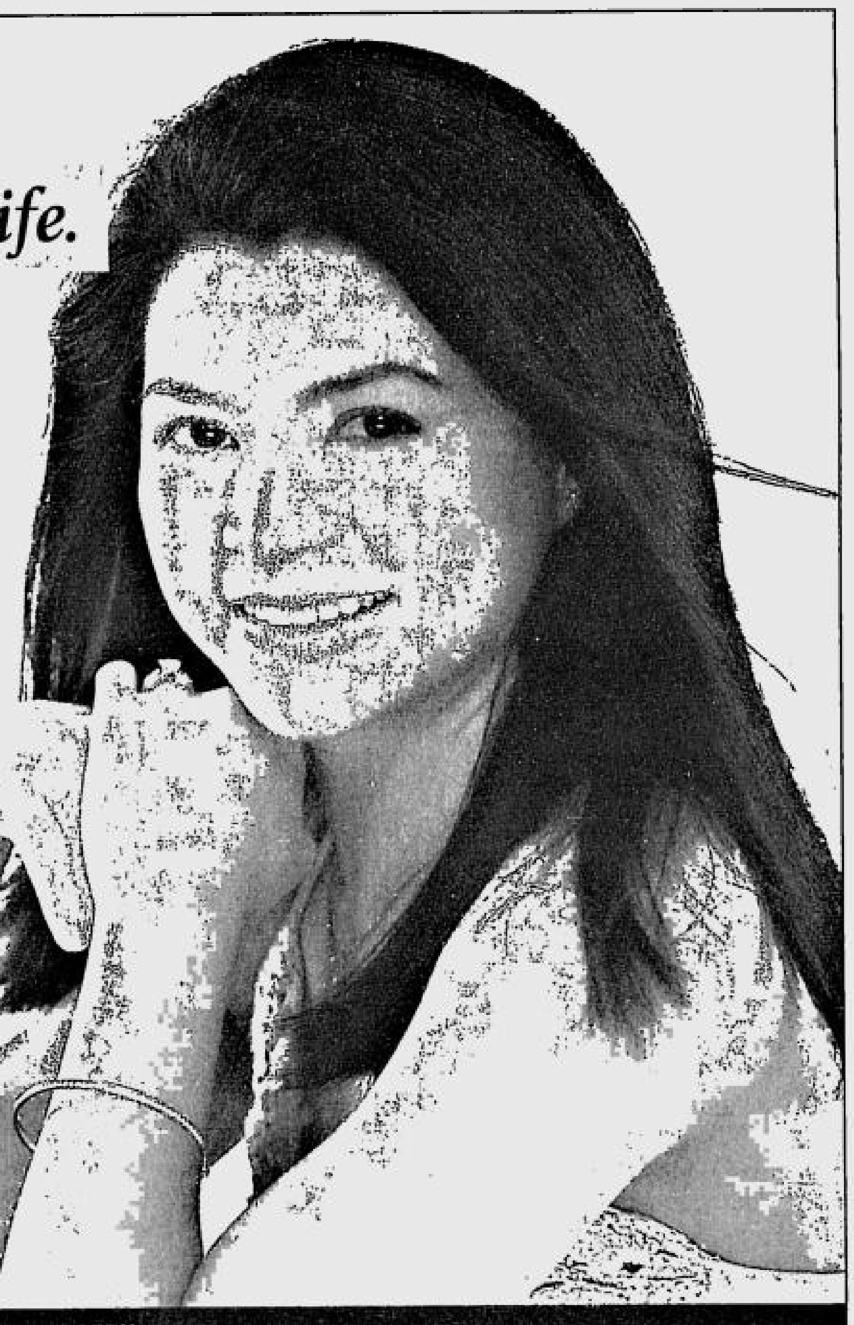
Angel Lesaca-Rosales, 33
Homemaker/Businesswoman



Her Secret: Angel regularly goes to the Facial Care Centre for Lymphatic Drainage Treatment. Detoxifies facial tissues. Reduces undereye circles and puffiness. Lightens and smoothens the complexion. We also suggest Intensive Clarifying Treatment. A highly specialized form of cleansing using the finest ingredients derived from herbal and fruit extracts. Creates visibly clearer, smoother skin and a far more radiant complexion.

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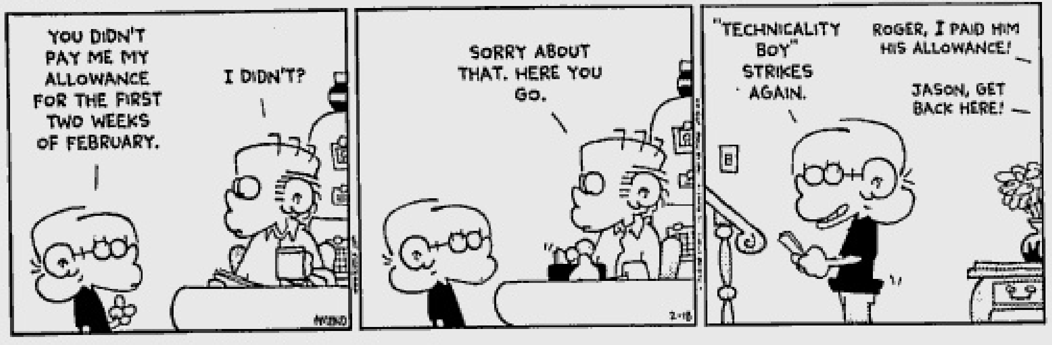
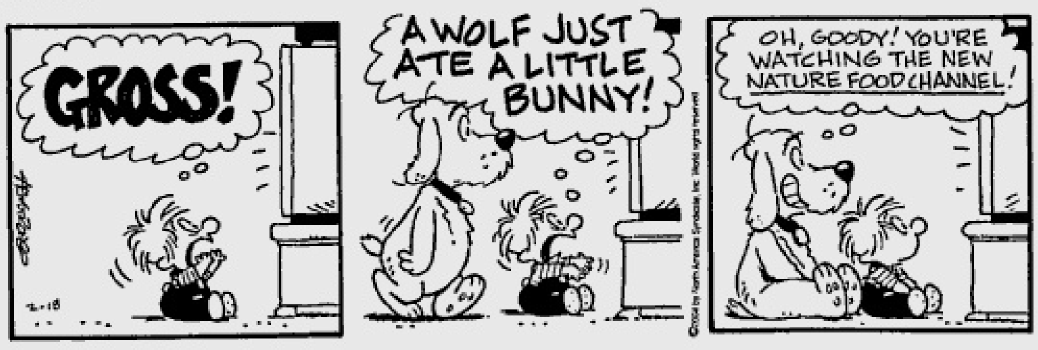
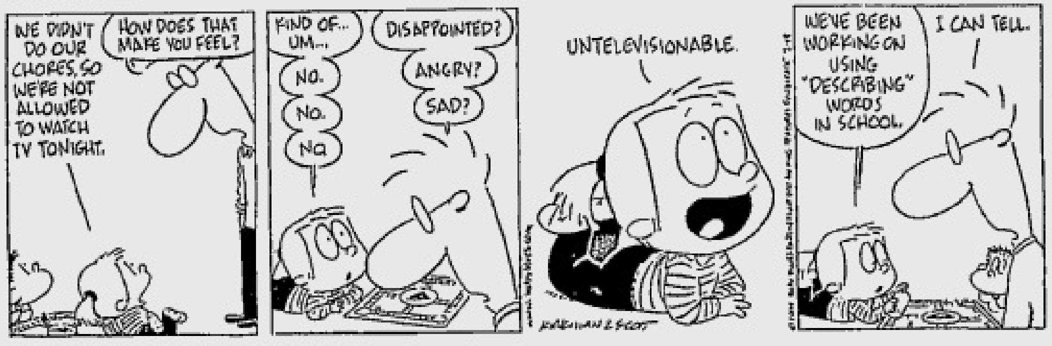

YOU DIDN'T PAY ME MY ALLOWANCE FOR THE FIRST TWO WEEKS OF FEBRUARY.
I DIDN'T?
SORRY ABOUT THAT. HERE YOU GO.
"TECHNICALITY BOY" STRIKES AGAIN.
ROGER, I PAID HIM HIS ALLOWANCE!
JASON, GET BACK HERE!
AMEND
2-18

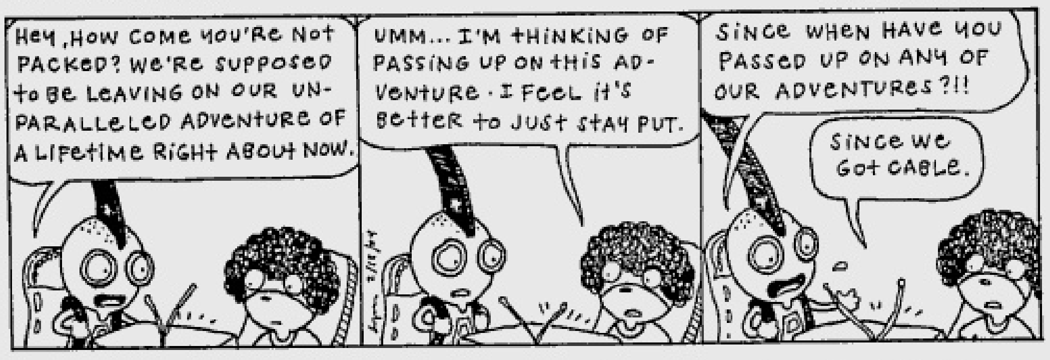
MARVIN BY TOM ARMSTRONG


GROSS!
A WOLF JUST ATE A LITTLE BUNNY!
OH, GOODY! YOU'RE WATCHING THE NEW NATURE FOOD CHANNEL!
2-18

BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT


WE DIDN'T DO OUR CHORES, SO WE'RE NOT ALLOWED TO WATCH TV TONIGHT.
HOW DOES THAT MAKE YOU FEEL?
KIND OF... UM...
DISAPPOINTED?
NO.
ANGRY?
NO.
SAD?
NO.
UNTELEVISIONABLE.
WE'VE BEEN WORKING ON USING "DESCRIBING" WORDS IN SCHOOL.
I CAN TELL.
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

ATOMO AND WEBOY • BY LYRA GARCELLANO


Hey, How come you're not packed? We're supposed to be leaving on our unparalleled adventure of a lifetime right about now.
Umm... I'm thinking of passing up on this adventure. I feel it's better to just stay put.
Since when have you passed up on any of our adventures?!!
Since we got cable.

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You are high-spirited, courageous and have a wonderful sense of humor. You can bounce back from adversity. You never lose faith. Your spontaneity and flexible attitude about life promote your happiness and well-being. You do what you like to do. The year ahead will be social and friendly and will focus on your closest relationships.
Birthdate of: Matt Dillon, actor; John Travolta, actor; Toni Morrison, writer.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): It's important to give yourself more downtime in the next few weeks. As your birthday draws near, think about what changes you want to happen in the year ahead.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): In the next few weeks, make a point of talking with others about your hopes for the future. You might be surprised by how helpful their feedback is.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You'll enjoy increased visibility in the next few weeks. Look your best. People notice you now. Accept increased responsibilities that come your way.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Your desire to learn more about everything is strong now. Some of you will want to take courses or go back to school. Others will make plans to travel. Allow your world to expand!

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Take care of business related to insurance matters, wills, inheritances, estates, loans and debt. You might also want to start a self-improvement plan related to diet, exercise or getting better organized.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): The Sun is now as far aw ay from your sign as it gets all year. You will need more rest. You can learn much from your closest partnerships in the next month.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Your environment affects you very strongly. Color, lighting, smells and choices of furniture matter to you. Work hard now to organize your environment to your liking.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Yours is a playful sign. In the month ahead, you will feel particularly frisky, flirtatious and even rebellious. You want to be free to do your own thing!

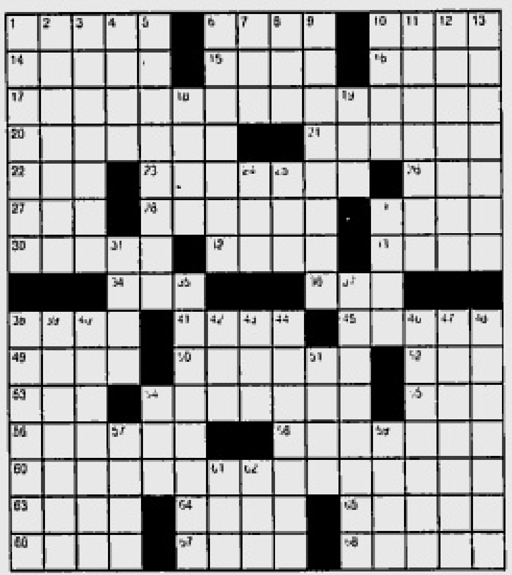
SAGITTARIUS: (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Focus on home, family and domestic issues in the next four weeks. Unexpected changes on the home front might require more attention from you.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Fasten your seat belt! You have a busy month ahead, with short trips, appointments and discussions with siblings. Neighbors and relatives will also get into the act.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Trust your moneymaking ideas now. You've been giving a lot of thought to your self-image and your possessions and resources. You're working hard now, and you want to feel that it's worthwhile. (It is.)

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): The Sun is about to enter your sign. Happy Birthday! For the next month, it's your turn to recharge your batteries for the rest of the year.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Stanley B. Whitten
Highwood, IL
2/18/04

ACROSS
1 Turned on the waterworks
6 Repair
10 Green shade
14 Clay or Frick
15 Toward shelter
16 Hertz competitor
17 Penny postcard, e.g.
20 Tidal wave
21 Exaggerate
22 That man
23 Eyelash cosmetic
26 Bond creator Fleming
27 Literary bits
28 Practical trainee
29 MX divided by V
30 "Olympia" painter
32 A few
33 Olin or Horne
34 Headed up
36 OJ trial letters
38 Facts
41 Arabian sultanate
45 Rapidly
49 Warning sign
50 Attorney
52 Camera letters
53 Start-up buttons
54 Of blood poisoning
55 Male heir
56 Way around
58 Copious
60 37-cent stamp, e.g.
63 Enjoy a repast
64 Yellow-billed rail
65 That is (to say): Lat.
66 Wise
67 City on the Oka River
68 Charges

DOWN
1 Neighbor of Windsor, Ontario
2 Greek wine
3 Monstrous
4 __ go bragh!
5 Powerful explosive
6 Red Guard members
7 Santa's helper
8 Snare
9 Disarmed, as a bull
10 Quip
11 Cupidity
12 Look down on
13 Neighbor of Latvia
18 FBI agent
19 Zsa Zsa Gabor's sister
24 Business bigwig
25 Upper limb
29 Applaud
31 Distinctive flair
35 Mournful, musically
37 Addictive, soporific drug
38 Trinkets
39 Loss of memory
40 Examining
42 Wright of "All"
43 Profound dread
44 Of beautiful maidens
46 Takes on
47 Nearest
48 Tubb and Hemingway
51 Homeland of the Irish
54 Large cask
57 S-shaped molding
59 Rover's brother?
61 In favor of
62 Three in Trieste

Tuesday's Puzzle Solved

F	I	S	T	S	■	L	O	L	L	■	P	A	R	E
U	N	L	I	T	■	I	D	E	A	■	A	S	I	A
R	A	I	S	E	O	N	E	S	S	I	G	H	T	S
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I	M	P	S	■	R	O	D	S	■	S	T	E	E	L

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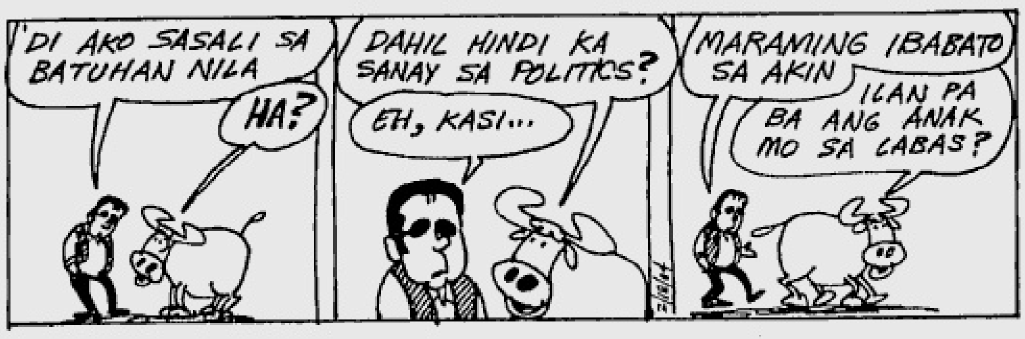
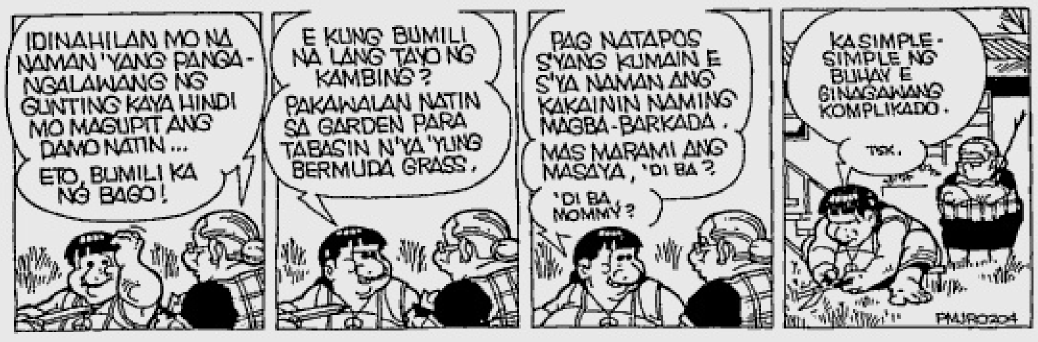
2/18/04

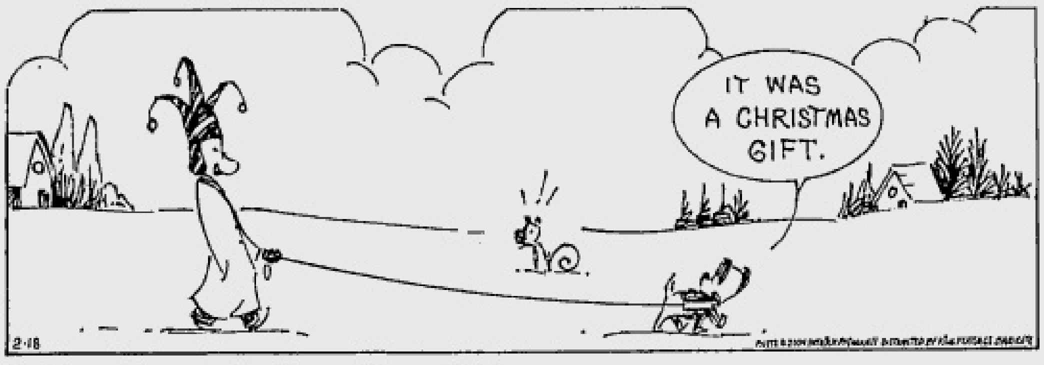
A. LIPIN BY JESS ABRERA


'DI AKO SASALI SA BATUHAN NILA
HA?
DAHIL HINDI KA SANAY SA POLITICS?
EH, KASI...
MARAMING IBABATO SA AKIN
ILAN PA BA ANG ANAK MO SA LABAS?

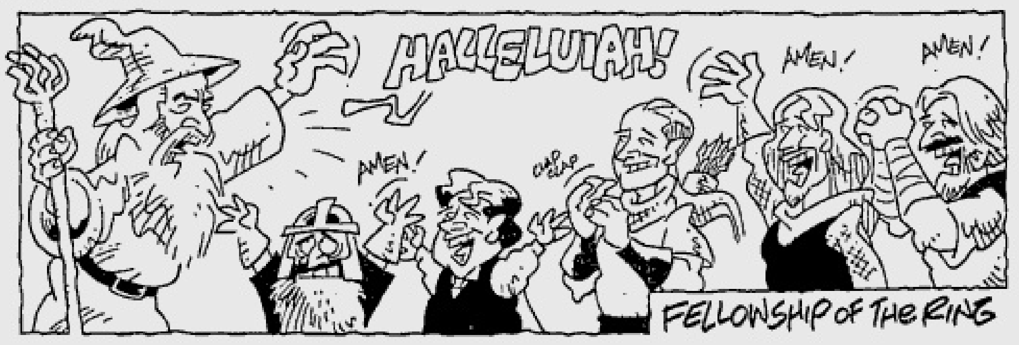
PUGAD BABOY BY P.M. JUNIOR


IDINAHILAN MO NA NAMAN 'YANG PANGANGALAWANG NG GUNTING KAYA HINDI MO MAGUPIT ANG DAMO NATIN ... ETO, BUMILI KA NG BAGO!
E KUNG BUMILI NA LANG TAYO NG KAMBING? PAKAWALAN NATIN SA GARDEN PARA TABASIN N'YA 'YUNG BERMUDA GRASS.
PAG NATAPOS S'YANG KUMAIN E S'YA NAMAN ANG KAKAININ NAMING MAGBA-BARKADA. MAS MARAMI ANG MASAYA, 'DI BA?
'DI BA, MOMMY?
KASIMPLE-SIMPLE NG BUHAY E GINAGAWANG KOMPLIKADO.
TSK.
PMJR0204

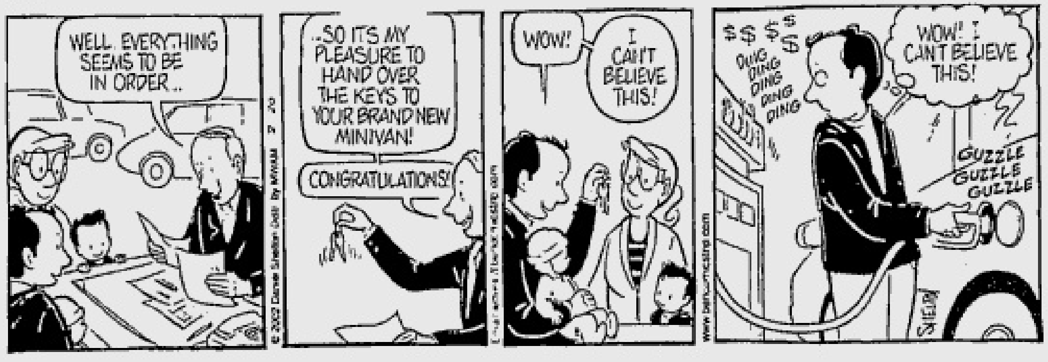
MUTTS BY PATRICK McDONNELL


IT WAS A CHRISTMAS GIFT.
2-18

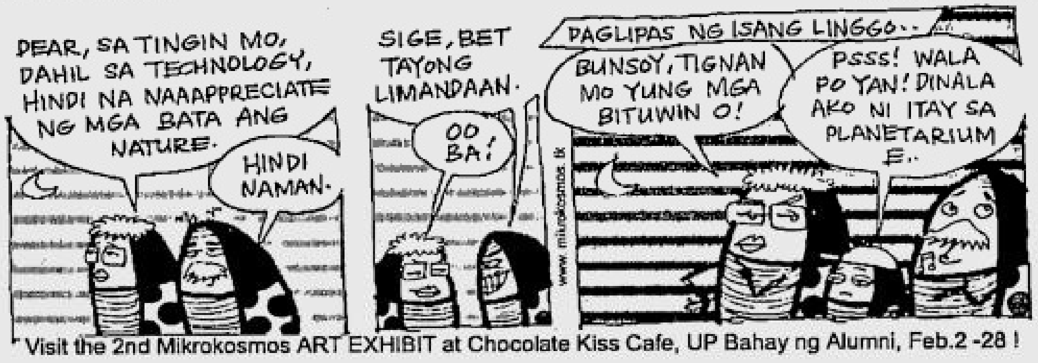
DIVINE COMEDY BY STEVEN PABALINAS


HALLELUIAH!
AMEN!
AMEN!
AMEN!
CLAP CLAP
FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING

BEN BY DANIEL SHELTON

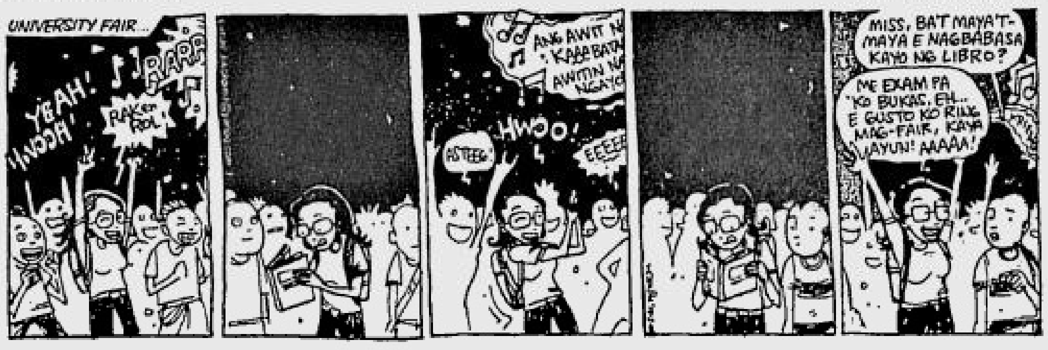

WELL, EVERYTHING SEEMS TO BE IN ORDER...
...SO IT'S MY PLEASURE TO HAND OVER THE KEYS TO YOUR BRAND NEW MINIVAN!
CONGRATULATIONS!
WOW!
I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS!
$ $ $ $
DING DING DING DING DING
WOW! I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS!
GUZZLE GUZZLE GUZZLE
www.bencomics.com

MIKROKOSMOS BY JOMIKE TEJIDO

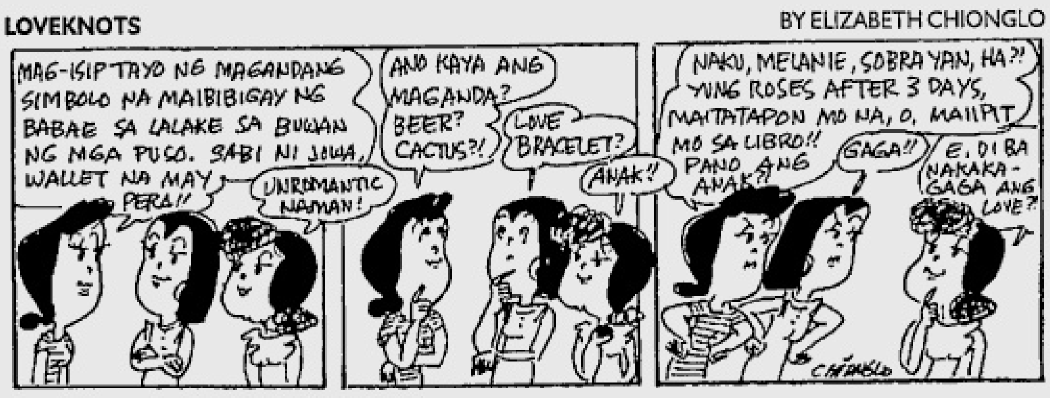

DEAR, SA TINGIN MO, DAHIL SA TECHNOLOGY, HINDI NA NAAAPPRECIATE NG MGA BATA ANG NATURE.
HINDI NAMAN.
SIGE, BET TAYONG LIMANDAAN.
OO BA!
PAGLIPAS NG ISANG LINGGO..
BUNSOY, TIGNAN MO YUNG MGA BITUWIN O!
PSSS! WALA PO YAN! DINALA AKO NI ITAY SA PLANETARIUM E..
www.mikrokosmos.tk

Visit the 2nd Mikrokosmos ART EXHIBIT at Chocolate Kiss Cafe, UP Bahay ng Alumni, Feb.2 -28 !

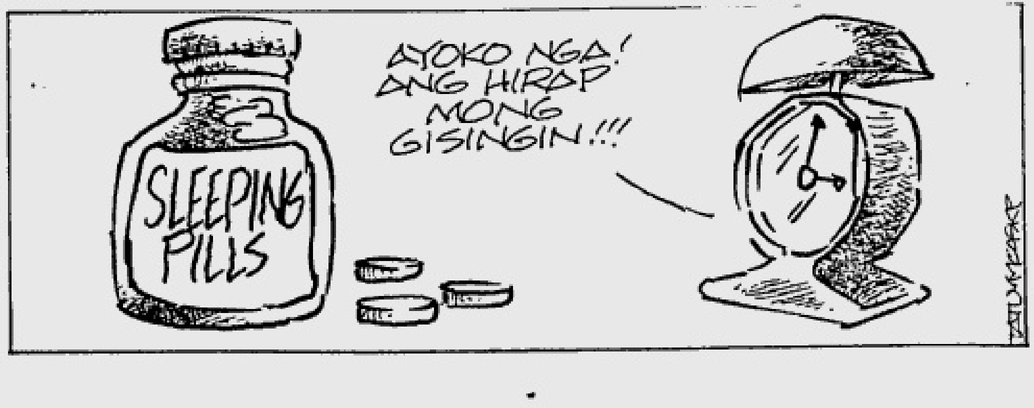
KIKO MACHINE BY MANIX ABRERA


UNIVERSITY FAIR...
YEAH!
WOOH!
RAKENROL!
RARR
ANG AWIT NA KABABATA AWITIN NA NGAYO
ASTEG!
HWOO!
EEEEE
MISS, BAT MAYA'T-MAYA E NAGBABASA KAYO NG LIBRO?
ME EXAM PA 'KO BUKAS, EH... E GUSTO KO RING MAG-FAIR, KAYA AYUN! AAAAA!

LOVEKNOTS BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


MAG-ISIP TAYO NG MAGANDANG SIMBOLO NA MAIBIBIGAY NG BABAE SA LALAKE SA BUWAN NG MGA PUSO. SABI NI JULIA, WALLET NA MAY PERA!!
UNROMANTIC NAMAN!
ANO KAYA ANG MAGANDA? BEER? CACTUS?!
LOVE BRACELET?
ANAK!!
NAKU, MELANIE, SOBRA YAN, HA?! YUNG ROSES AFTER 3 DAYS, MAITATAPON MO NA, O, MAIIPIT MO SA LIBRO!! PANO ANG ANAK?!
GAGA!!
E, DI BA NAKAKA-GAGA ANG LOVE?
CHIONGLO

TULDOK BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


SLEEPING PILLS
AYOKO NGA! ANG HIRAP MONG GISINGIN!!!

5 reasons Michelle Branch rocks

From page D1

1. She always knew what she wanted to do

Back in school, whenever her teachers would ask her what she wanted to be when she grew up, Michelle always said she was going to be a singer.

After watching a New Kids on the Block concert, she was determined to be a pop star.

"I've been singing since I could talk," she shares. "Back home in Arizona, I remember friends going, "you're a really great singer, we didn't know you could play the guitar." So I always thought I was different."

Michelle was 8 years old when she started taking voice lessons at a University in Sedona. Getting in wasn't easy, though.

"I went to the university and the voice teacher said, 'She's too young, I can't teach her,'" she recalls.

Fortunately, after hearing Michelle's demo tape, teacher Gina Betturn agreed to take her under her wing.

"All the college students were going, 'Hey, you don't belong here, you're 8 years old!' I had my books and everything, just like them," she recalls.

Her first guitar was given to her on her 14th birthday, and by the next day, she had already written a song (before that she'd play Neil Young and Cat Steven hits on guitar).

She'd write songs virtually anywhere she could. "Sweet Misery," a track from her first album, "The Spirit Room," was written during Algebra 1.

Michelle would play shows around her hometown, and record company execs would go and watch her. In early 1999, a family friend phoned her to go to a nearby resort, as a record label guy was there.

"[My friend] and I hopped into a golf cart and high-tailed it down to the hotel," she says. "It was there that I met Jeff Rabhan."

Just like Betturn, Jeff didn't make it easy for her. It took two months before he called her back to cut her independently released LP, "Broken Bracelet."

2. She's no Britney

Sure, she's done the cover of Maxim and has been caught wearing quite revealing outfits at events. But Michelle's nowhere near donning a peek-a-boo rhinestone suit or stripping at the VMA.

She even jokes that she probably wouldn't do a collaboration with Madonna, because she "wouldn't want to make out with her."

Plus, she writes her own material. Although she admits that "The Spirit Room" was a purely fictional album ("I wrote most of the songs when I was 14 and 15, but I haven't been in any relationships that have inspired me back then."), Michelle doesn't need Swedish songwriters to pen chart-topping hits for her.

And where does all this inspiration come from?

"[Hotel Paper] is absolutely from experience, and it wasn't about a lot of people, just one person, unfortunately," she says, laughing. "I never thought I would write songs that were personal. I always thought it was weird that I would write stuff that has happened to me."

Right now, Michelle finds herself whipping out her guitar to write songs about her family.

"I'm at that point in my life when I want to stand up on my own and be independent, and when I get home, my parents go, 'Take out the trash!'"

She's also quick to point out that she takes down pointers from fellow musicians. On her way to Singapore, she and her manager, being major Silverchair fans, were watching their live video.

"I'd put it on pause every five minutes and go, 'Okay, I want to do that the next time I'm on tour!'"

"First of all, I'm a music fan," she shares. "And I get really excited whenever I hear a new song. And that's when I go look for a guitar, a pen and some paper."

3. She's not afraid to grow up

From releasing the "Spirit Room" at 17 to touring the world by 21, Michelle was forced to grow up a lot faster than everyone else —but she's not complaining.

"When I look back, I see how different I am, and I feel a lot more independent than when I first started. And I mean independent—I don't feel like I need my parents. And they get mad because I don't call them anymore," she says.

"I really feel like I'm my own person, and I feel like I can talk about my own ideas and be treated like an adult."

And it's evident in the music she puts out. She admits she was afraid to voice out her opinions while recording "Spirit Room," but did a 180-degree turn while in the studio for "Hotel Paper."

"[Hotel Paper] was completely in my hands. It was produced by John Shanks, and he worked on the first record, so I really trusted him."

That doesn't necessarily mean she hates her debut album. "I think [every artist] goes through that—I always hear artists going, 'You know what, my first record was great for what it's worth, but I'm so excited to do my second record because I've learned a lot from the first.'"

Change also found its way into her wardrobe. "When I first came out I was always running around in jeans and a T-shirt," she says. "People perceived me as the anti-Britney, but now I'm kinda sick of being the tomboy, I wanna look hot."

4. She's worked with Santana...

And Sheryl Crow. That and she's posed with a lot of other then up-and-comers like John Mayer and P.O.D. for Vanity Fair's 2002 music issue.

But cutting a record *and* winning a Grammy for a collaboration with Santana definitely takes the cake.

"I'm a huge, huge, huge fan of Carlos, and when I was younger, I used to go to his concerts with my mom," she says, starting to get giddy. "We'd have his records playing in the house."

Although Michelle does admit that recording "Game of Love" had one drawback. "After a while people were going, 'Oh, you're the girl who sang with Carlos Santana.' And I go, aaaw, is that all I am? I wanted to be known as 'Oh yeah, you're Michelle Branch, didn't you do that song with Carlos Santana?' But that was definitely a turning point for me."

If anything, it made her even want to try harder and push herself even more to be noticed.

And Sheryl Crow? "I recorded with Sheryl but we didn't get to perform live, so I would love to play live with her. As far as looking to what I would like to see for myself and my career, that's someone I totally respect. I learned so much from her."

5. What you see is what you get

Michelle makes no bones about who she is and who she wants to be—even if it means being scrutinized by other people.

She starts talking about her website (michellebranch.net), where she used to post a blog and photos that took while on the road. Unfortunately, she doesn't update it much anymore, or even check it out.

"When I did Maxim, I went on there, and I got so upset because fans were going, 'that slut, that sellout,'" she says. "It was so rude. I couldn't believe they said that. Now I'm like, you know what, I don't want to go on there anymore. Now they go, 'Why doesn't she post here anymore?' I'm like, wow, you wonder why? I mean, you say all these things and yet you still come on here. So I still feel bad."

This little shutterbug (she's seriously into photography as well) doesn't let it affect her much, though.

"People can go feel what they want," she later says. Besides, she's got a lot of other things to keep herself busy: a US tour in March and plans to take a year off to start writing for her new record.

"And this may sound cliché, but I have a friend who's a great screenwriter, and we're talking about making a movie, but it won't be "Crossroads," I promise you. It won't be anything stupid. I won't act on it, I just want to try my hand at something else."

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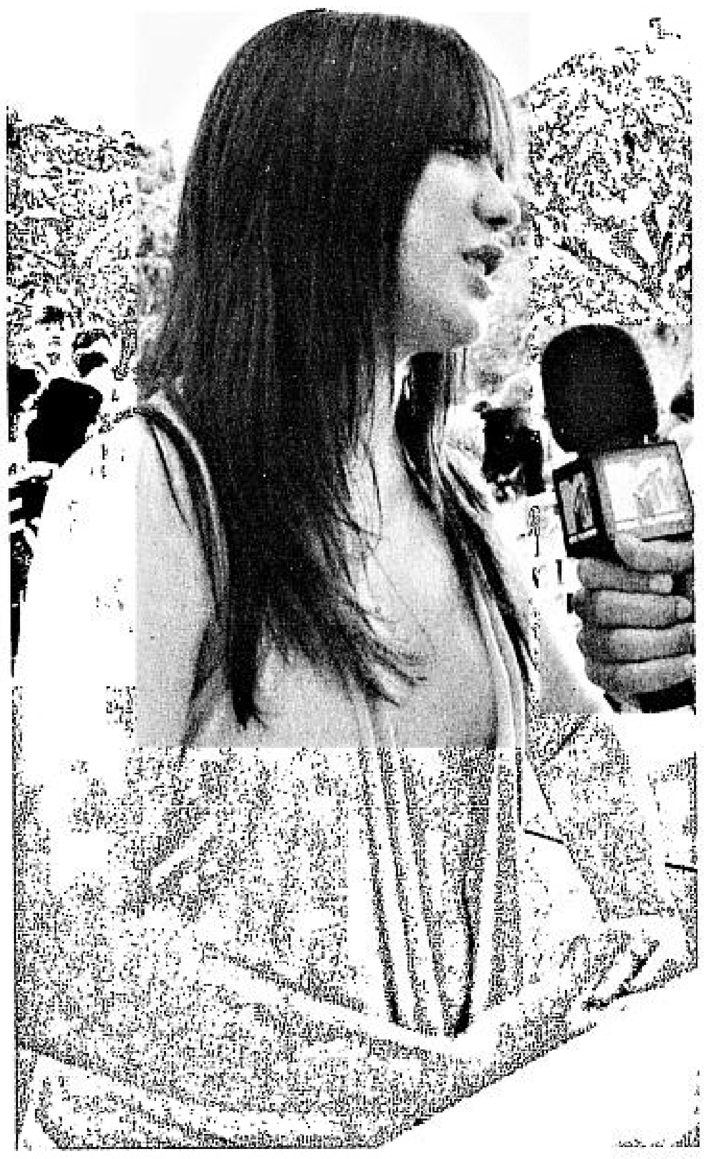
THE RACY Maxim cover

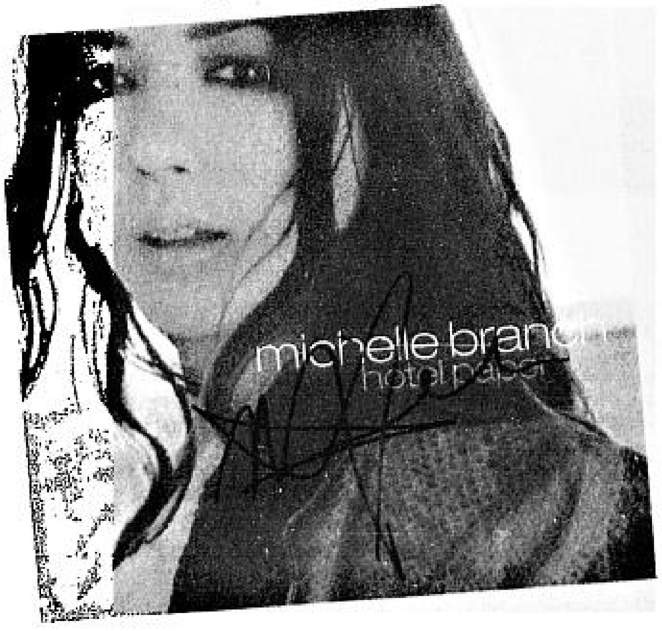


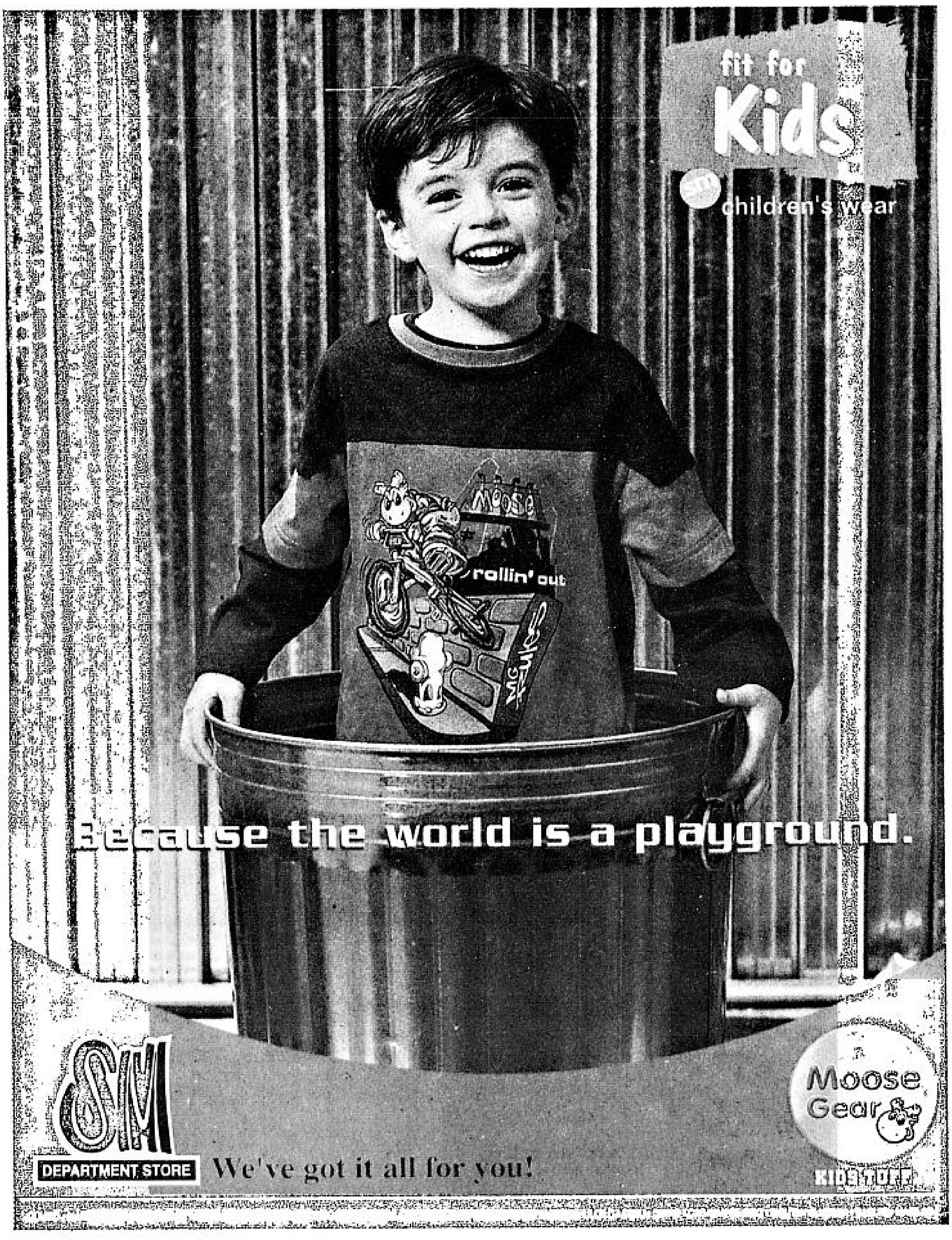
MICHELLE strutting her stuff at the MTV Asia Awards red carpet

MAUI V. REYES

Win Michelle Branch signed CDs!

I KNOW, we rock too. Did you expect us to come home from Singapore empty-handed?! We've got three autographed copies of "Hotel Paper" to give away, thanks to the cool peeps from Warner Music Philippines (sorry, the Maxim is for us). To win one of these babies, just give us one other reason why Michelle Branch rocks. E-mail your answers to contest2bu @inquirer.com.ph. Deadline is on Feb. 16, 12nn.





Share with us your favorite memories

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"We ordered the same thing," he said. My mind went "We're compatible!" I smiled. Wide.

"Would you mind if we share another round?" he asked.

We consider it our first date, queer as it was. On Jan. 17, 1997, we got married.—**Merian Bien, Sta. Mesa, Manila**

Winners may claim their prizes at the INQUIRER Bldg., Chino Roces Ave. cor. Yague and Mascardo Sts., Makati on Mondays, 4 p.m. onwards. Look for Pam or Ruth. Call 8978808 local 325.

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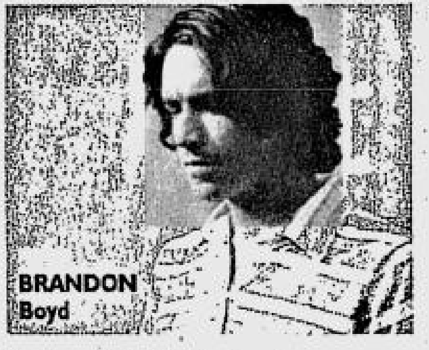

BRANDON Boyd

Win VIP tickets to Incubus concert

DO you know anyone who looks like Incubus hottie Brandon Boyd?

If you answered yes to that question, you've just found yourself one step closer to winning two VIP tickets to the March 12 Manila concert of Incubus.

All you have to do is dress up your Brandon look-alike in a Jag shirt and Jag jeans. Take his picture and send it to contest2bu@inquirer.com.ph along with your name, age, school/office and contact numbers.

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Winners will be notified by a text or a phone call and should present their ID when claiming tickets at the Jag Jeans boutique in Glorietta 1. Look for Ms June Magno from Monday to Saturday, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. For inquiries call 8171158.

The concert, dubbed "A Crow Left of the Murder World Tour—Live in Manila," will be on March 12 at the CCP Open Grounds. It is presented by Jag Jeans, Smart Buddy and Myx Music Channel.

Get ready to be arrested by the hard-hitting performance of Brandon Boyd, Mike Einziger, Elen Kenney, Jose Pasillas and DJ Kilmore on March 12.

Tickets for the Incubus concert are now available at all SM Ticketnet outlets at very affordable prices: reserved seats at P1,956 and standing at P950 and P550. For sales and inquiries, please call 9115555 or 3735734.

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My Favorite Things	*Outkast*	**TONE MYFAVE**
Himala	*Rivermaya*	**TONE HIMALA**
Julie Tearjerky	*Eraserheads*	**TONE JULIE**
Let Her Down Easy	*Ronan Keating*	**TONE LETHER**
Hard To believe	*Eraserheads*	**TONE HARDTO**
I Found Someone	*Cher*	**TONE FOUNDS**
Guilty	*Blue*	**GUILTY**
Sexed up	*Robbie Williams*	**SEXED**
New Deep	*John Mayer*	**NEWDEEP**

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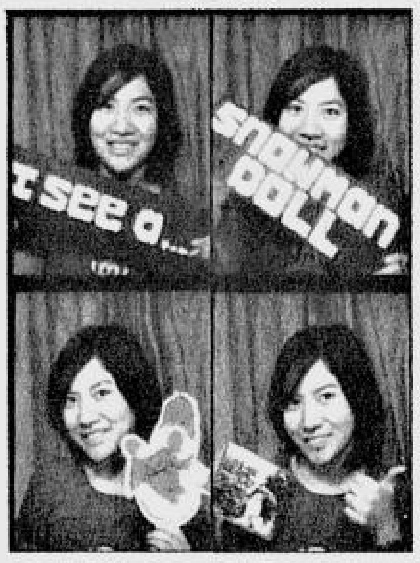

ALL FOR THE LOVE OF ZAI ZAI. The most creative entry came from Leriza Rose Velecina.

They get to sleep with Vic

THERE'S no doubt about it, Vic Zhou has a horde of fans in the Philippines.

Our clogged inbox can attest to that.

And after getting over a thousand e-mails, one would think that picking the winners would be a difficult task. But some people made choosing easy.

We love people who go the extra mile. These fans will be going home with Vic's pajamas, thanks to their creative flair.

Leriza Rose Velecina, Project 4, Quezon City

Sarah Kang, Faith Academy

Joyce Zabal, Cagayan de Oro

These 20 consolation winners will be bringing home Vic Zhou posters courtesy of Sony.

1. Lucille Chuasiaokong
2. Kym Macatubal
3. Michelle Muñoz
4. Clarita Lim
5. Cattleya Lomboy
6. Shieryl Lyn Moroña
7. Debra Almond Demonteverde
8. Josephine Dungog
9. Cheryl Laxamana
10. Monica Narisma
11. Celia Teng
12. Jinky Young
13. Armi Marie Avillano
14. Jeremy Marie Lorenzo
15. Ann Navarro
16. Aira Allarde
17. Ethelyn So
18. Ziel Canlas
19. Ginoel Ivan Teng
20. Charmaine Rachelle Dionisio

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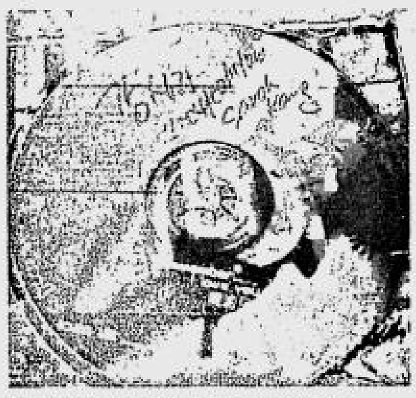
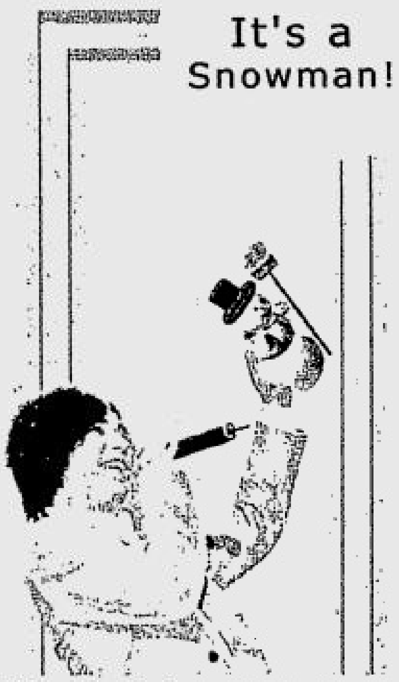
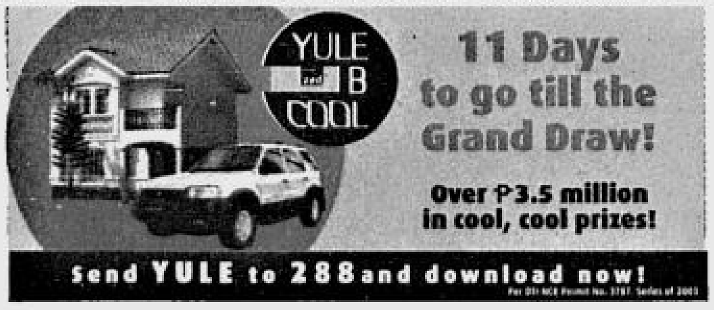


WOW, Sarah Kang proves that she bought the CD on the day we announced the contest.


It's a Snowman!

VIC vouches for Joyce Zabal's entry.



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The concert, dubbed "A Crow Left of the Murder World Tour—Live in Manila," will be on March 12 at the CCP Open Grounds. It is presented by Jag Jeans, Smart Buddy and Myx Music Channel.

Get ready to be arrested by the hard-hitting performance of Brandon Boyd, Mike Einziger, Elen Kenney, Jose Pasillas and DJ Kilmore on March 12.

Tickets for the Incubus concert are now available at all SM Ticketnet outlets at very affordable prices: reserved seats at P1,956 and standing at P950 and P550. For sales and inquiries, please call 9115555 or 3735734.

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The Voice Within	*Christina Aguilera*	**TONE VOICEW**
My Favorite Things	*Outkast*	**TONE MYFAVE**
Himala	*Rivermaya*	**TONE HIMALA**
Julie Tearjerky	*Eraserheads*	**TONE JULIE**
Let Her Down Easy	*Ronan Keating*	**TONE LETHER**
Hard To believe	*Eraserheads*	**TONE HARDTO**
I Found Someone	*Cher*	**TONE FOUNDS**
Guilty	*Blue*	**GUILTY**
Sexed up	*Robbie Williams*	**SEXED**
New Deep	*John Mayer*	**NEWDEEP**

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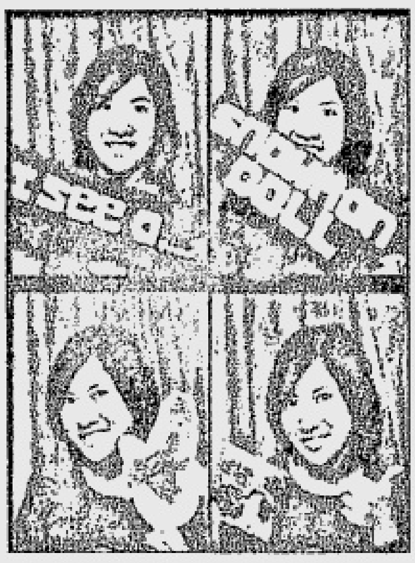
Featured tone of the week:
Hey Ya by **Outcast**.
Exclusively available via POWTONE.

Get a different "girly" calendar logo everyday!
18 FEB WED
Just send **CALGAL** to **288**.
P5 per daily delivery of logo.

Get a different "guy" calendar logo everyday!
18FEB WED
Just send **CALGUY** to **288**.
P5 per daily delivery of logo.



ALL FOR THE LOVE OF ZAI ZAI. The most creative entry came from Leriza Rose Velecina.

They get to sleep with Vic

THERE'S no doubt about it, Vic Zhou has a horde of fans in the Philippines.

Our clogged inbox can attest to that.

And after getting over a thousand e-mails, one would think that picking the winners would be a difficult task. But some people made choosing easy.

We love people who go the extra mile. These fans will be going home with Vic's pajamas, thanks to their creative flair.

Leriza Rose Velecina, Project 4, Quezon City

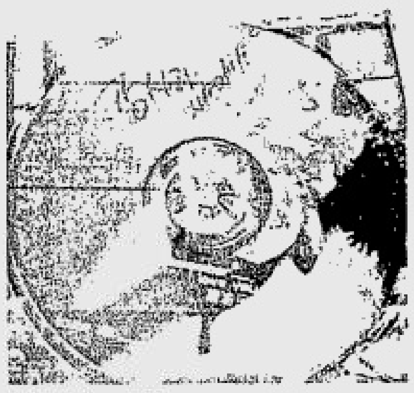
Sarah Kang, Faith Academy

Joyce Zabal, Cagayan de Oro

These 20 consolation winners will be bringing home Vic Zhou posters courtesy of Sony.

1. **Lucille Chuasiaokong**
2. **Kym Macatubal**
3. **Michelle Muñoz**
4. **Clarita Lim**
5. **Cattleya Lomboy**
6. **Shieryl Lyn Moroña**
7. **Debra Almond Demonteverde**
8. **Josephine Dungog**
9. **Cheryl Laxamana**
10. **Monica Narisma**
11. **Celia Teng**
12. **Jinky Young**
13. **Armi Marie Avillano**
14. **Jeremy Marie Lorenzo**
15. **Ann Navarro**
16. **Aira Allarde**
17. **Ethelyn So**
18. **Ziel Canlas**
19. **Ginoel Ivan Teng**
20. **Charmaine Rachelle Dionisio**

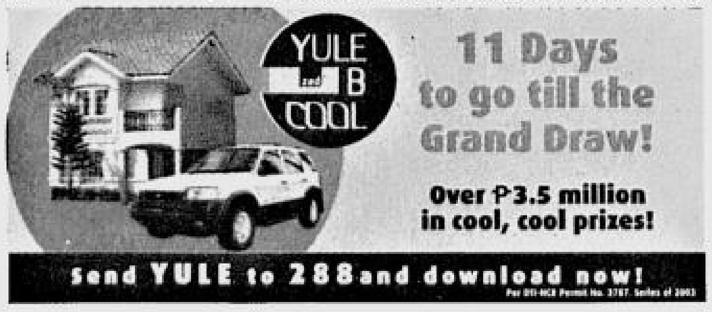
Winners may claim their prizes at the INQUIRER Bldg., Chino Roces Ave. cor. Yague and Mascardo Sts., Makati on Mondays, 4 p.m. onwards. Look for Pam or Ruth. Call 8978808 local 325.



WOW, Sarah Kang proves that she bought the CD on the day we announced the contest.

It's a Snowman!

VIC vouches for Joyce Zabal's entry.



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KA KIKO/ A9

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EPA/MIKE ALQUINTO

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By Christian V. Esguerra, Christine O. Avendaño and Philip C. Tubeza

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"That's *kwentong kutsero* (a tall tale)," Sotto, Poe's campaign manager, said in a phone interview. He said the KNP leadership was "not even entertaining the thought that FPJ will be taken out of the race."

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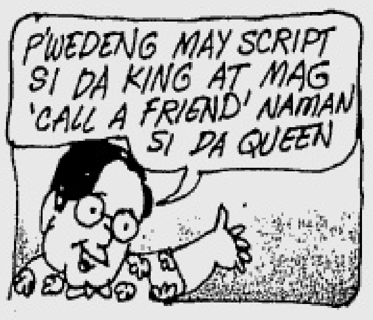
TITO/ A4



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GLORIA/ A9

FPJ and Loren
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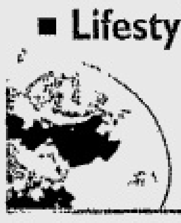

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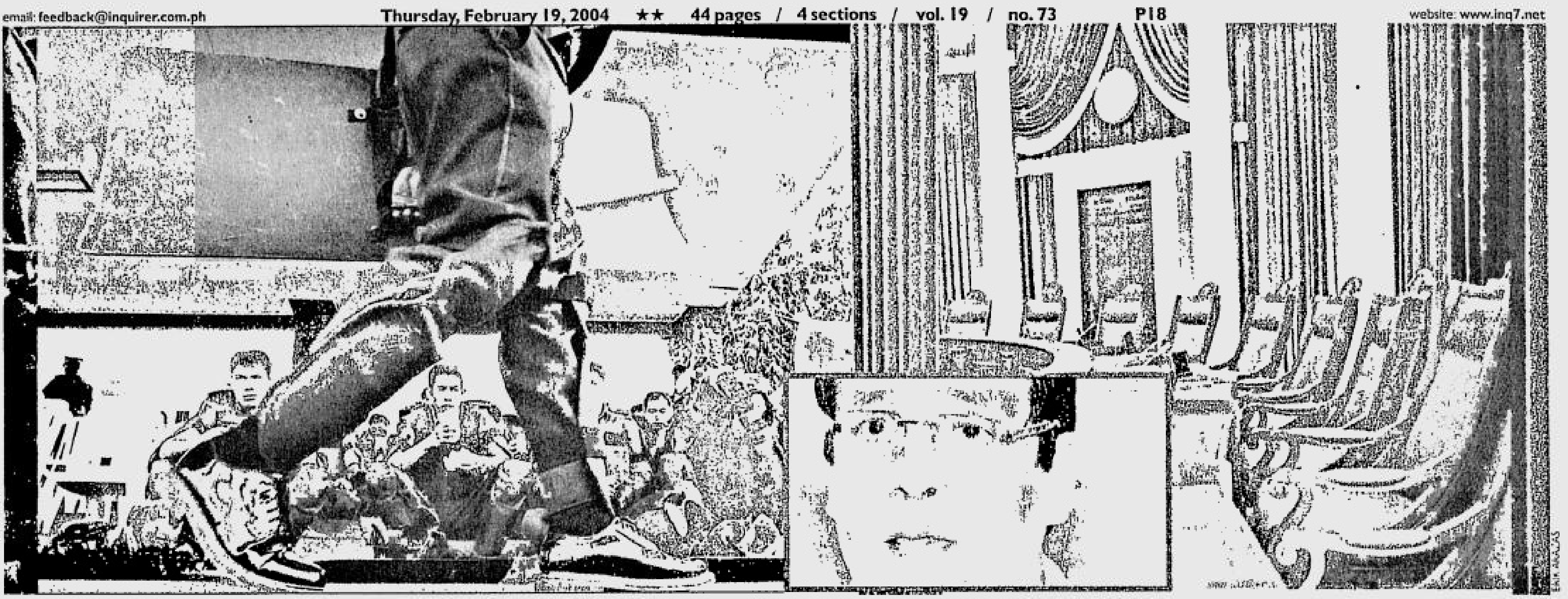

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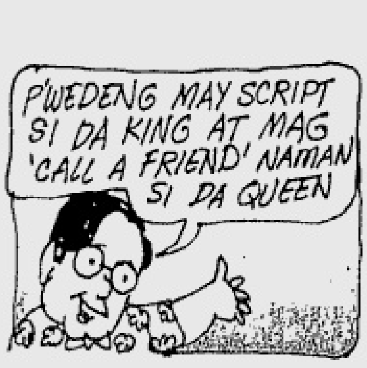

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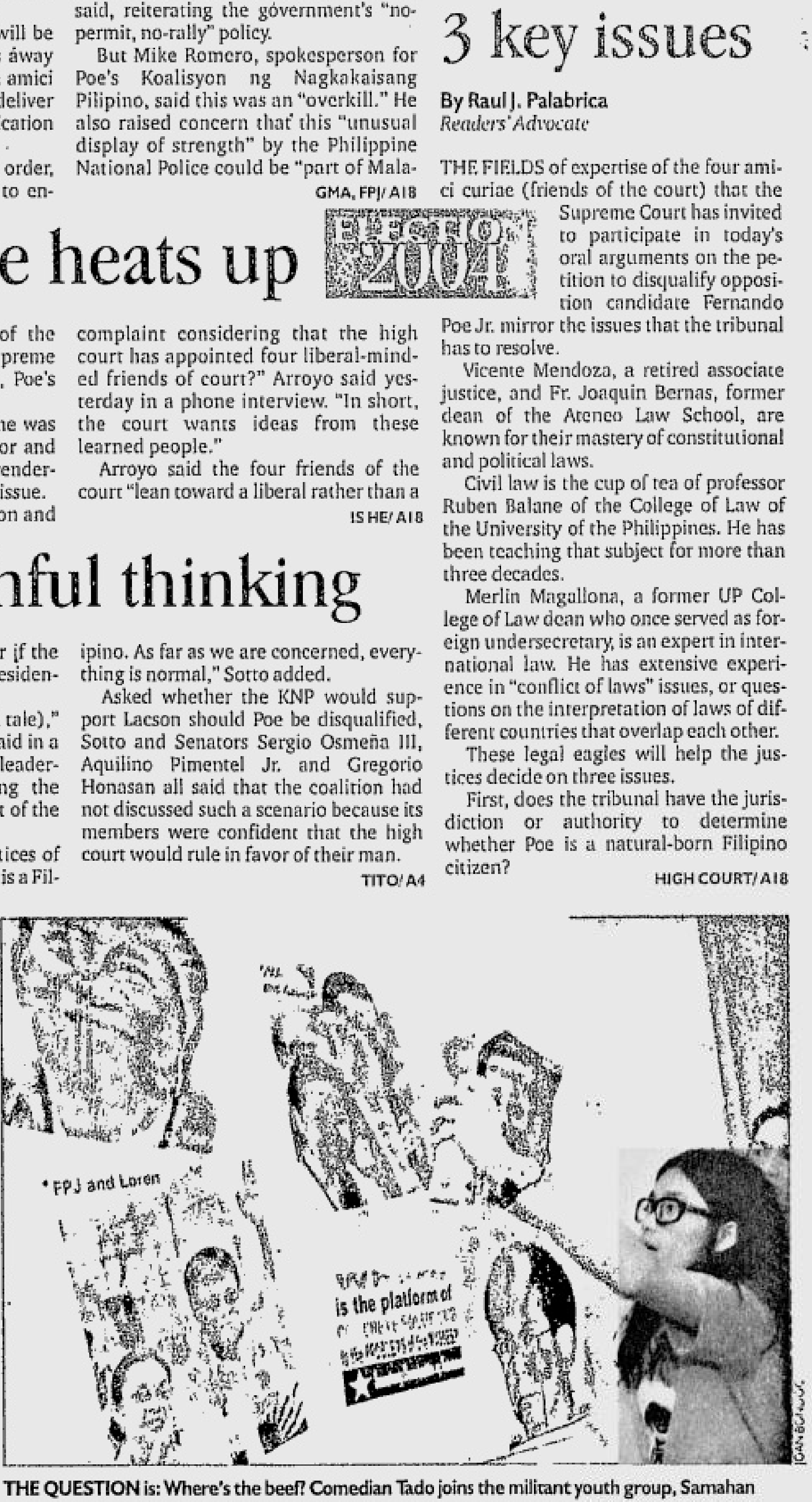

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Visayas and Mindanao particularly Eastern Visayas and Northeastern Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy with isolated rainshowers.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/02/19/04

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

E-mail: pr_news@inquirer.com.ph

Second FRONTPAGE

2 new poll execs reassigned

By Martin P. Marfil and Juliet Labog-Javellana

THE COMMISSION on Elections yesterday reassigned its two newest officials, taking one out of his Mindanao assignment, in a bid to stem the controversy caused by the new appointments.

Comelec chair Benjamin Abalos said that "to prove to you that we are not insensitive to public opinion," he was reassigning commissioner Virgilio Garcillano to the Southern Tagalog and Bicol regions.

Abalos said he would himself be overseeing the Mindanao elections with the help of the other newly appointed commissioner, Manuel Barcelona.

This was to show that "we are not insensitive" and "to assuage the fears of the opposition, especially Sen. Aquilino Pimentel."

The appointment of Garcillano and Barcelona has been assailed because of their allegedly close links with Malacañang.

Pimentel has claimed that Garcillano was involved in vote-shaving and padding operations in Mindanao during the 1995 polls resulting in Pimentel's losing his bid for a senatorial seat.

Barcelona, who is said to have contributed P500,000 to President Macapagal-Arroyo's 1998 campaign, has been assigned to oversee elections in eastern, western and northern Mindanao, while Abalos will handle southern Mindanao and the National Capital Region.

In a related development, Malacañang yesterday asked the Comelec to invite a team of international observers to "monitor the conduct" of the May 10 elections.

Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo endorsed to Abalos a request from the United States-based National Democratic Institute which "expressed enthusiasm" to lead such an observer mission.

The NDI is headed by Richard Lugar, the former senator who led the US observer delegation to the 1986 snap elections here which the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos won with the aid of massive cheating. His opponent, Corazon Aquino, the widow of slain opposition leader Sen. Benigno Aquino Jr., was swept into the presidency when Marcos was ousted in the country's first people power revolution.

Romulo said Lugar offered to consult with the International Republican Institute, the Carter Center and other international election experts to form a multinational and bipartisan delegation to send to the Philippines.

"We believe that the presence of international observers will help ensure integrity, transparency, impartiality and credibility in the electoral process, a bedrock of Philippine democracy," Romulo said.

Abalos welcomed the proposal but said he wanted to discuss details of the undertaking with Romulo.

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Visayas and Mindanao particularly Eastern Visayas and Northeastern Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy with isolated rainshowers.

SOURCE PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/02/19/04

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

2 new poll execs reassigned

By Martin P. Marfil and Juliet Labog-Javellana

THE COMMISSION on Elections yesterday reassigned its two newest officials, taking one out of his Mindanao assignment, in a bid to stem the controversy caused by the new appointments.

Comelec chair Benjamin Abalos said that "to prove to you that we are not insensitive to public opinion," he was reassigning commissioner Virgilio Garcillano to the Southern Tagalog and Bicol regions.

Abalos said he would himself be overseeing the Mindanao elections with the help of the other newly appointed commissioner, Manuel Barcelona.

This was to show that "we are not insensitive" and "to assuage the fears of the opposition, especially Sen. Aquilino Pimentel."

The appointment of Garcillano and Barcelona has been assailed because of their allegedly close links with Malacañang.

Pimentel has claimed that Garcillano was involved in vote-shaving and padding operations in Mindanao during the 1995 polls resulting in Pimentel's losing his bid for a senatorial seat.

Barcelona, who is said to have contributed P500,000 to President Macapagal-Arroyo's 1998 campaign, has been assigned to oversee elections in eastern, western and northern Mindanao, while Abalos will handle southern Mindanao and the National Capital Region.

In a related development, Malacañang yesterday asked the Comelec to invite a team of international observers to "monitor the conduct" of the May 10 elections.

Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo endorsed to Abalos a request from the United States-based National Democratic Institute which "expressed enthusiasm" to lead such an observer mission.

The NDI is headed by Richard Lugar, the former senator who led the US observer delegation to the 1986 snap elections here which the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos won with the aid of massive cheating. His opponent, Corazon Aquino, the widow of slain opposition leader Sen. Benigno Aquino Jr., was swept into the presidency when Marcos was ousted in the country's first people power revolution.

Romulo said Lugar offered to consult with the International Republican Institute, the Carter Center and other international election experts to form a multinational and bipartisan delegation to send to the Philippines.

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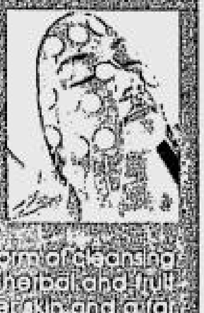

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12 Pinoys hurt in Iraq attack

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Tito on Ping: Wishful thinking

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Feelers

But an official of the Lacson camp said it had started to receive feelers from prominent national candidates of the KNP and grassroots leaders of its member-parties, the Partido ng Masang Pilipino and the Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino faction head by Sen. Edgardo Angara.

The source told reporters in Iloilo City that those who sent the feelers expressed "a clear intent" to join Lacson if Poe is disqualified.

"[Their coming to our side] is a natural consequence of Poe's disqualification," the source said. "There is also heightened speculation that he would just drop out of the race."

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"It's [Estrada's] prerogative. I cannot force him to endorse me," Lacson said, adding:

"Endorsements cannot be demanded. If he endorses me, I will be thankful. If he doesn't want to endorse me, I cannot do anything about it."

Lacson served as the trusted lieutenant of Estrada as early as the 1990s when the latter was still Vice President and head of the Presidential Anti-Crime Commission. Lacson then headed the PACC's Task Force Habagat.

During the Estrada administration, Lacson was appointed head of the Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force and, later, chief of the Philippine National Police.

Full steam ahead

Sotto said in the phone interview that Poe's camp was "forging full steam ahead with its campaign plans" despite the pending disqualification issue.

He also strongly denied Lacson's claim on Monday night that a "mutual friend" had approached Lacson and offered concessions in exchange for withdrawing from the presidential race.

"That's absolutely not true," Sotto said. "I should know."

Per Lacson's claim, the concessions included a P100-million reimbursement of campaign expenses, the interior and local government portfolio, and Poe's endorsement in the 2010 presidential elections.

Sotto also described as "reckless and uncalled-for" former Justice Secretary Arturo Tuquero's comment that Poe could be disqualified because the actor was born an illegitimate child and was thus not a natural-born Filipino.

No doors closed

In a separate interview, KNP senatorial candidate Francisco Tatad said he was proposing the convening soon of a top-level leaders' meeting in the opposition coalition.

"Opposition leaders should meet and address this issue frontally," Tatad said of the disqualification issue as well as Lacson's bid to become opposition standard-bearer.

Asked if he would personally agree to join forces with Lacson, Tatad said that without a common decision by the coalition, personal opinions did not matter at this time.

But he added: "No doors are closed. We must examine possibilities."

KNP senatorial candidate Rep. Didagen Dilangalen (Maguindanao) said Poe was "not going to throw in the towel."

"The people will react negatively if he is disqualified," Dilangalen said.

'Military' Cabinet

Lacson plans to appoint former military and police officials in key positions in the government if he wins in the May elections.

"There's nothing wrong with appointing ex-military and police officials to the Cabinet," he said in Iloilo. "They have the experience in managing people and handling crisis situations. Their talents should be put to good use."

But he qualified: "I'm not saying that my Cabinet will be dominated by ex-military officials. What I am saying is, Let's treat everybody equally. Let's not discriminate against the military."

Lacson, a 1971 graduate of the Philippine Military Academy, said that sometimes it could not be helped that ex-military officers are named to key posts.

"In the case of the Department of National Defense, for example, I don't believe that we should appoint a pure civilian [to prevent its being 'militarized']," he said. "In my experience, giving [the position] to one who's from the military will do the country well."

Fresh faces

What will make him different from the other presidential candidates is that he will form a Cabinet of fresh faces, Lacson said.

He said he would not tap "old politicos who are recycled from elective positions for the Cabinet for accommodation," and would even disqualify outright those who would apply for any Cabinet position under his term.

"Those who will apply for [a post] have a motive," he said. "It would be better to look for [deserving ones] and convince them to join the Cabinet. We'll definitely be searching for talents." *With a report from Raj Padilla, PDI Visayas Bureau*

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"It's [Estrada's] prerogative. I cannot force him to endorse me," Lacson said, adding:

"Endorsements cannot be demanded. If he endorses me, I will be thankful. If he doesn't want to endorse me, I cannot do anything about it."

Lacson served as the trusted lieutenant of Estrada as early as the 1990s when the latter was still Vice President and head of the Presidential Anti-Crime Commission. Lacson then headed the PACC's Task Force Habagat.

During the Estrada administration, Lacson was appointed head of the Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force and, later, chief of the Philippine National Police.

Full steam ahead

Sotto said in the phone interview that Poe's camp was "forging full steam ahead with its campaign plans" despite the pending disqualification issue.

He also strongly denied Lacson's claim on Monday night that a "mutual friend" had approached Lacson and offered concessions in exchange for withdrawing from the presidential race.

"That's absolutely not true," Sotto said. "I should know."

Per Lacson's claim, the concessions included a P100-million reimbursement of campaign expenses, the interior and local government portfolio, and Poe's endorsement in the 2010 presidential elections.

Sotto also described as "reckless and uncalled-for" former Justice Secretary Arturo Tuquero's comment that Poe could be disqualified because the actor was born an illegitimate child and was thus not a natural-born Filipino.

No doors closed

In a separate interview, KNP senatorial candidate Francisco Tatad said he was proposing the convening soon of a top-level leaders' meeting in the opposition coalition.

"Opposition leaders should meet and address this issue frontally," Tatad said of the disqualification issue as well as Lacson's bid to become opposition standard-bearer.

Asked if he would personally agree to join forces with Lacson, Tatad said that without a common decision by the coalition, personal opinions did not matter at this time.

But he added: "No doors are closed. We must examine possibilities."

KNP senatorial candidate Rep. Didagen Dilangalen (Maguindanao) said Poe was "not going to throw in the towel."

"The people will react negatively if he is disqualified," Dilangalen said.

'Military' Cabinet

Lacson plans to appoint former military and police officials in key positions in the government if he wins in the May elections.

"There's nothing wrong with appointing ex-military and police officials to the Cabinet," he said in Iloilo. "They have the experience in managing people and handling crisis situations. Their talents should be put to good use."

But he qualified: "I'm not saying that my Cabinet will be dominated by ex-military officials. What I am saying is, Let's treat everybody equally. Let's not discriminate against the military."

Lacson, a 1971 graduate of the Philippine Military Academy, said that sometimes it could not be helped that ex-military officers are named to key posts.

"In the case of the Department of National Defense, for example, I don't believe that we should appoint a pure civilian [to prevent its being 'militarized']," he said. "In my experience, giving [the position] to one who's from the military will do the country well."

Fresh faces

What will make him different from the other presidential candidates is that he will form a Cabinet of fresh faces, Lacson said.

He said he would not tap "old politicos who are recycled from elective positions for the Cabinet for accommodation," and would even disqualify outright those who would apply for any Cabinet position under his term.

"Those who will apply for [a post] have a motive," he said. "It would be better to look for [deserving ones] and convince them to join the Cabinet. We'll definitely be searching for talents." *With a report from Raj Padilla, PDI Visayas Bureau*

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GMA's hard sell to squatters: Housing, clean water, clean gov't

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

USING the hardsell tactic she employed on soldiers, President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday told the squatters in Quezon City to vote for her if they want to have titles to the land their presently occupy and for their community to have permanent connection to clean water.

In a visit to the Barangay Batasan Hills in Quezon City to bring her water project, the President said that the "informal settlers" living near the House of Representatives have obtained the right to own the land that they live on after she issued a proclamation identifying the area as part of the government's socialized housing program for the poor.

"But the actual identification of the land that you will buy and your first payment, that will be the next installment. But now we can say that you are no longer squatters in your own land," she told the appreciative audience.

Water connection

Ms Macapagal said that aside from housing, squatters also need access to clean water. She said that water pipes have been installed in the area as part of her program to secure water connection for the poor "waterless" communities in Metro Manila. But she noted that the water connection has yet to be completed and in those that have been connected, there was still low water pressure.

"And while we are waiting for those pipes to be laid down and strong water pressure will be had 24 hours a day, I have asked my co-workers to provide for the meantime free clean water through the trucks that are now here," she said.

Ms Macapagal said that from her experience as chief executive, she knows that the people, especially the poor, want to have clean water and clean government.

"So for all of you, this is my downpayment—housing, clean water and clean government. But I need a new mandate from you so that our proclamation will be translated to land titles and these water trucks translated to permanent pipes and I will give you clean government (as well)," she said in Filipino.

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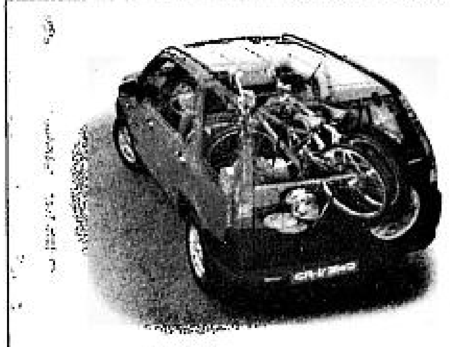

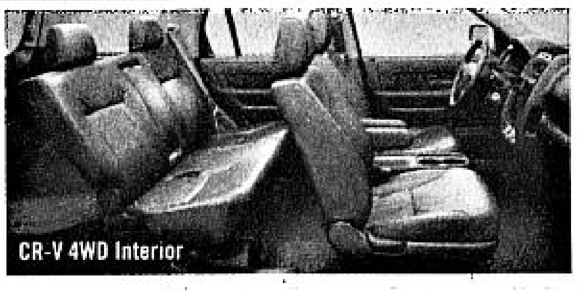

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Teachers to get ₱1,000 a day for poll duty

PUBLIC school teachers going on poll duty will get a P100 increase in their daily honorarium.

Instead of P900, they will now be getting a daily allowance of P1,000 for manning the polls from May 10 to 12.

With about 400,000 teachers going on poll duty, the budget for teachers' allowance alone translates to P1.2 billion.

The Department of Education and the Commission on Elections approved the increase on Feb. 16, on the request of some teachers' groups.

But it is not clear where they would get the additional budget.

"They (budget department) have to realign (some budget allocations)," said Education Secretary Edilberto de Jesus.

De Jesus said he had asked the Department of Budget and Management to advance half of the allowances by March.

The Alliance of Concerned Teachers welcomed the "positive development."

The Manila Public School Teachers Association had wanted a P2,500 daily allowance.

Aside from the allowance, the Comelec would also set up a P25 standby insurance fund for teachers.

Teachers who would get hurt while on duty would get a maximum insurance coverage of P100,000.

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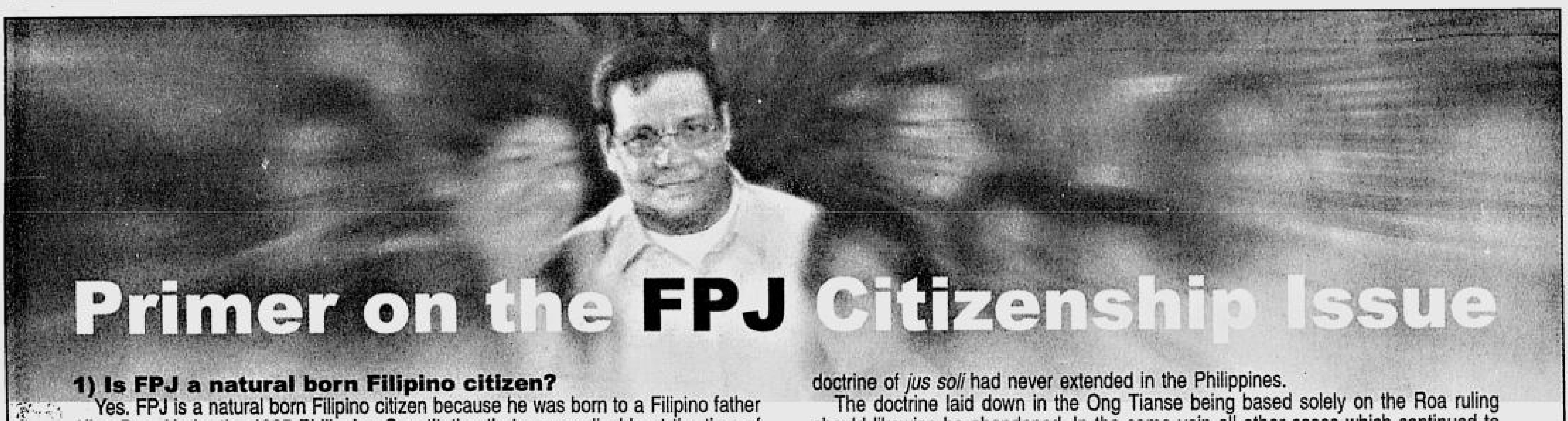

Primer on the FPJ Citizenship Issue

1) Is FPJ a natural born Filipino citizen?

Yes. FPJ is a natural born Filipino citizen because he was born to a Filipino father Allan Poe. Under the 1935 Philippine Constitution that was applicable at the time of FPJ's birth in 1939, a person whose father is a Filipino is a Filipino citizen. Notably, the constitutional provision does not make any distinction as to the legitimacy or illegitimacy of the person. It should be understood in its literal meaning.

2) What is the basis for claiming that FPJ was an illegitimate son?

It is claimed in the disqualification petitions that prior to the marriage of his father to his mother, FPJ's father was previously married to a certain Paulita Gomez. His father's marriage to his mother Bessie Kelly was therefore void.

It is important to note that forged documents were submitted to the COMELEC in support of this claim of a prior marriage of Allan Poe to Paulita Gomez. The supposed first marriage remains a grotesque allegation.

3) Was the father of FPJ Filipino or not?

Yes, FPJ's father Allan Poe was a Filipino citizen. Allan Poe was a Filipino citizen being born to a Filipino father, Lorenzo Pou. FPJ's grandfather Lorenzo while Spanish was an *Insulare* who did not choose to formally remain as Spanish when the United States of America took over the Philippines. Under the Treaty of Paris (Philippine Bill of 1902), only *Peninsulares* who chose to remain in the Philippine territory and preserve their allegiance to the Crown of Spain must declare before a proper court of their intention to preserve such allegiance, otherwise they shall be held to have renounced it and to have adopted the nationality of the territory in which they reside. Lorenzo Pou did not have the option nor did he make any such declaration. Lorenzo Pou, therefore, was deemed Filipino. His son, Allan Poe, who is FPJ's father, was likewise Filipino.

4) Assuming FPJ was illegitimate, is it correct to say that he should follow the citizenship of his mother following the ruling in the United States v. Ong Tianse?

No. The reliance of the disqualification petitions on the ruling in Ong Tianse in claiming that the citizenship of an illegitimate child follows that of the mother is severely misplaced.

The Ong Tianse case ruling was based on abandoned *jus soli* doctrine.

This case was decided primarily on the basis of the doctrine of *jus soli* (citizenship by place of birth) which had long been abandoned. In the Philippines, the prevailing doctrine is jus *sanguinis* (citizenship by blood).

The Ong Tianse case was based on the decisions of the courts in the United States in interpreting laws related to the doctrine of *jus soli* (citizenship by place of birth). The Philippine Supreme Court in the earlier case of Roa v. Collector of Customs, 23 Phil. 315 (1912) had ruled that the doctrine of *jus soli* extended in this jurisdiction. The Roa ruling was, however, eventually reversed by the Supreme Court in the case of Tan Chong v. Secretary of Labor, 79 Phil. 249 (1947), when it said that the common law doctrine of *jus soli* had never extended in the Philippines.

The doctrine laid down in the Ong Tianse being based solely on the Roa ruling should likewise be abandoned. In the same vein all other cases which continued to apply, albeit erroneously, the Ong Tianse doctrine that says that the citizenship of an illegitimate child follows that of the mother must accordingly be modified.

Factual premises different

The factual premises of the Ong Tianse case, including all subsequent cases relying on the Ong Tianse ruling, are significantly different from the case of FPJ. The Ong Tianse and all such other similar cases involved petitions for recognition of Philippine citizenship by persons who were illegitimate children of Filipino mothers and Chinese fathers.

In the case of FPJ, it was his father who was Filipino and his mother was not. FPJ was recognized by his father and parental authority over him was exercised by him.

Ong Tianse will create an absurd situation

A blind application of the Ong Tianse ruling to the case of FPJ will deprive him of Philippine citizenship that he lawfully derived from his father.

The constitutional provisions should prevail

Under the 1935 Philippine Constitution, Article IV, Section 1(3), persons whose fathers are citizens of the Philippines are considered natural born Filipino citizens. There is nothing in the Constitution that limits the applicability of the constitutional provision only to legitimate children and not to illegitimate ones. No such distinction must be permitted.

Two cases of illegitimate children born of Filipino fathers and alien mothers

1) Roberto de Guzman case (ID# 104031 ACR) - born 1966 before the legal marriage of a Chinese mother and a Filipino father, was even issued an Alien Certificate of Registration (ACR) ; in 1990 Roberto de Guzman filed a petition at the Bureau of Immigration and was granted a cancellation of his ACR on the ground that he is a natural born citizen.

2) Jovita Uy case - born 1951 before the legal marriage of a Vietnamese mother and a Filipino father, also was issued an ACR that was also cancelled upon her petition in 1978 on the ground that she had always been a natural born citizen.

Ordinary citizens who were at one time illegitimate children of a Filipino father and an alien mother have easily obtained rulings favoring their being natural born citizens. Why should FPJ be singled out for different treatment? Why was FPJ's citizenship not questioned by the administration when he was broached to be the vice-presidential candidate for the administration?

To disqualify FPJ is to disenfranchise the Filipino people.

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Roco to stay home, won't woo OFWs

UNLIKE his rivals, Alyansa ng Pag-asa standard bearer Raul Roco will not be taking long flights to woo overseas workers. Instead, his staff will do the campaigning in the comfort of their headquarters in Manila, with the click of a mouse.

"To be more cost-efficient, we will utilize e-mail and the Web to campaign to our Filipino workers abroad," Jaime Galvez-Tan, Roco's political adviser, said in a phone interview.

Roco had partly acknowledged allegations that he has poor machinery, admitting on Tuesday that he could run a 90-day campaign with P150-P200 million kitty. His strategists are relying on volunteers to carry on their campaign.

Tan also pointed out that there was no need for Roco and his slate to bring their campaign abroad, noting that a group of migrant workers who had signed up as volunteers were rooting for him in Hong Kong, United States and Saudi Arabia.

"We have volunteers working in the midst of overseas workers," he said.

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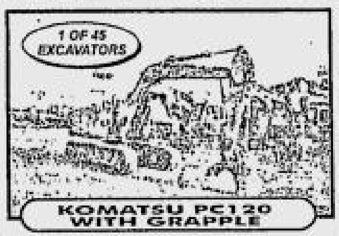

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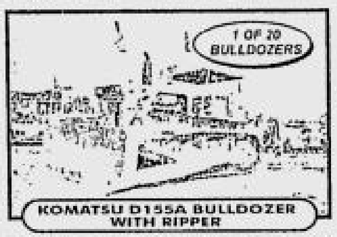

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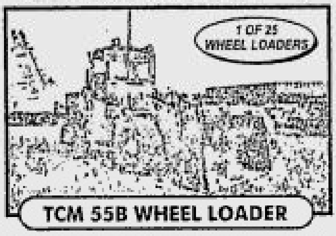

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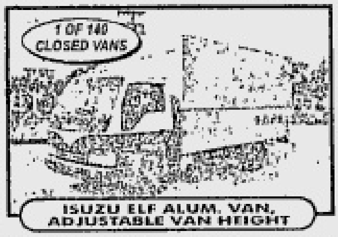

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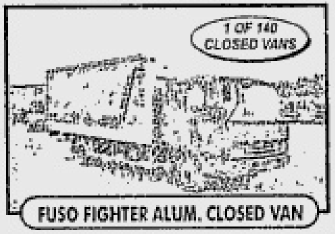

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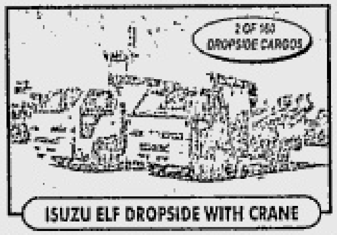
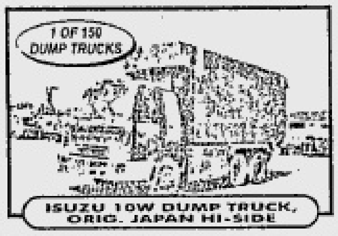
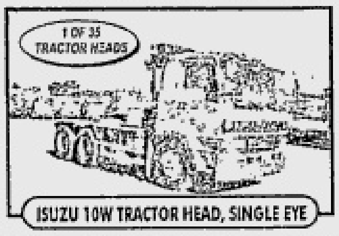


2 OF 160 DROPSIDE CARGOS
ISUZU ELF DROPSIDE WITH CRANE

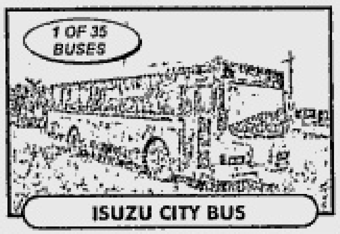
1 OF 160 DROPSIDE CARGOS
ISUZU FORWARD FRR ALUM. DROPSIDE



1 OF 150 DUMP TRUCKS
ISUZU 10W DUMP TRUCK, ORIG. JAPAN HI-SIDE

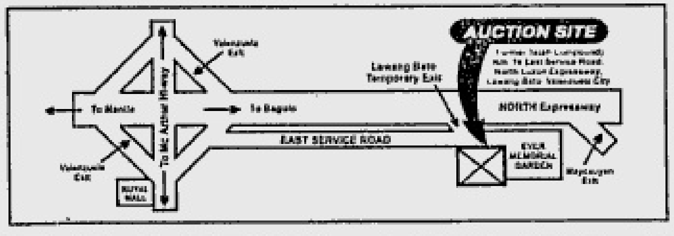


1 OF 35 TRACTOR HEADS
ISUZU 10W TRACTOR HEAD, SINGLE EYE



1 OF 35 BUSES
ISUZU CITY BUS

ISUZU ELF BACKHOE TRUCK



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CONSUMER & OIL PRICE WATCH
Private Sector

TRANSPORT FARE INCREASE INEVITABLE

The transport fare increase is inevitable if Shell and Petron will shift their method of pricing from Dubai crude to Regional Pricing of Finished Products - MOPS Singapore, retroactive to January of this year. This means that the oil price increase will be substantial as the two refineries will follow the pricing of the new players, who import 100% of their requirements from the region.

AN APPEAL TO THE OIL INDUSTRY

We are appealing to Shell and Petron to postpone the shift to April when the MOPS will be lower. Also, we are asking the oil refineries and the new players to call for a press conference and to come out with a print advertisement explaining the rationale behind the shift in pricing and its advantage to the consuming public.

MEETING WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

We will meet with the DOE Secretary Vince Perez Jr. to discuss how we can work closely with them on the oil industry's shift to MOPS and the need to obtain the MOPS of gasoline and diesel on a daily basis.

LTFRB HEARING

The COPW will be present tomorrow as amicus curae or friend of the court at the LTFRB hearing on the petition for a transport fare increase. Also, the transport sector, the LTFRB, and the COPW will have a two-day workshop presided by LTFRB Chairperson, Elena Bautista, to benchmark the operating cost of the transport sector composed of Metro Manila and provincial buses, and the jitney. With the benchmark established, petition for transport fare increases or decreases may be done every six months, when necessary.

DTI TAKES THE LEAD

The Department of Trade and Industry has taken the lead in lowering the cost of tires and batteries for the transport sector and the importation of spare parts duty-free by the government thru the Philippine International Trading Corporation (PITC).

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GSIS— its real mandate

These past few months have been very difficult and trying times for all of us in the GSIS. Never in its history has the institution been subjected to much stress and strife as what happened in the second semester of the past year. During the period, the GSIS suddenly became the subject of angry street marches, harsh open letters, tirades over radio, television and print through vicious commentaries and one-sided news releases, which have all had the effect of placing the institution in public condemnation, ridicule and contempt. In addition, we in the GSIS were personally harassed and harangued through hostile outbursts, curses, insults and even threats from our members.

And what have we done to deserve all of these? Our strong resolve to implement the unpopular but much-needed reforms to strengthen the GSIS as a social insurance institution. I want all of you to take note of my use of the phrase "social insurance" in order to describe GSIS as an institution because I honestly believe that the strong, vociferous, and even violent opposition to our reform agenda were borne from a complete misunderstanding of the real nature and role of GSIS in the dispensation of benefits to its members.

The real purpose of the GSIS

An informal survey which my staff conducted in order to find out members' understanding of GSIS is quite revealing. Twelve percent believe that it is primarily a housing agency responsible for providing housing to its members, 25% believe it is a lending institution that our members can always depend on for salary loans, 15% is of the Impression that it is a life insurance agency, and 28% believe it is a pension fund responsible for providing pension to its members as a reward for government service. But what is significant is that 16% of the members who were interviewed could not make up their minds on what GSIS is all about.

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And so the threshold question is: what is GSIS really all about? As I said earlier, GSIS is first and foremost a social insurance institution. As such, and consistent with the nature of insurance, the GSIS is tasked to provide protection to its members and their families against the occurrence of certain contingencies such as death, disability, separation from service, unemployment or retirement. In return, the law obligates its members and its agencies to remit, every month, and without delay, premium contributions in proportion to their monthly compensation. Under our present retirement law, the compulsory nature of the members and their agencies to remit on time the monthly contributions are explicitly laid out under sections 3, 5, 7 and 52 of RA 8291, otherwise known as the GSIS Retirement Law.

A symbiotic relationship

Accordingly, it is clear that the GSIS mandate to provide protection is indispensably linked with the monthly premium obligations of its members and their agencies. In other words, the right of a member to demand protection from GSIS carries with it the corresponding obligation to pay the required premiums.

This is grounded not only by reasons of practicality but also on equitable considerations. On practicality, because the ability of the GSIS to provide protection and dispense the benefits defined by law are largely dependent on the contributions from its members and their agencies. And this is not even enough. In order to sustain the actuarial solvency of the pension fund, it is required that for every peso of contribution that should be remitted to the System, it has to earn at least 12% per year. Where else could GSIS source the payment of benefits other than from the contributions and the returns generated from the investment of these contributions?

And on equitable considerations, it is only but fair and just that those who have contributed more to the System should be provided with greater protection than those who have contributed less. Otherwise, there can be no legal nor moral basis to require some members to contribute more only to be given the same treatment as to benefits received with those who have contributed less, or worse, have made no contribution at all. An illustrative case would be two GSIS members who have both been in government service for 35 years, have the same salary, and are both retiring on the same day. The only basic difference is that one has been religiously paying the monthly premium contributions for the past 35 years while the other one can only show 5 years of premium contributions. Shall both receive the same retirement benefits? Certainly not. To allow otherwise will not only be inequitable but it will certainly be a disincentive for others who have been religiously remitting to the GSIS.

Sins of the past

Over the years, however, the real role and nature of GSIS as a social insurance institution was confused and misconstrued to be that of a mere government agency responsible for dispensing benefits to government employees without regard to its ability to raise funds in order to sustain them. Thus, the prevailing notion that mere service in government was enough to entitle one to receive benefits from GSIS even if no corresponding premium contributions were remitted or paid for those services.

Unfortunately, this wrong notion seems to also prevail in the GSIS itself. The primary focus was the payment of benefits to members in disregard of the means in order to financially sustain them. This was self-evident when the System entirely ignored the most basic and only means to accurately ascertain payment of the corresponding premium obligations by failing to maintain a reliable record of premium payments posted to the account of a particular member.

Instead, the System, in order to expedite and facilitate payment of benefits, blindly placed its faith and trust on service records and certified payments submitted by government agencies in computing the payment of benefits and loan repayments of members. We, however, belatedly realized that such blind leap of faith on service records and certified payments was highly misplaced.

When tested against what the agencies actually remitted and paid to GSIS for premium contributions and loan repayments of members' loans with what these agencies and members should have paid or remitted, the results were very disturbing, to say the least.

Over the six-year period covering July 1997 to December 2002, we discovered that GSIS had a collection efficiency of only 70% both for premium contributions and loan repayments. When translated into outstanding accounts, again, the results were very alarming. Over these five-year period alone, the GSIS accumulated premium receivables from various government agencies of more than P40 billion and members loans in default of more than P25 billion. And if we consider the opportunity cost to the System, the losses to the System were compounded by an almost equivalent amount.

Concerned on the impact these premium receivables and loans in default will have on the actuarial solvency of the pension fund, management directed its actuarial department to make extensive studies on the life of the fund. Its findings raised the alarm bells to near panic levels. Over the stated five-year period alone, there was a perceptible and dramatic decline in the actuarial life of the pension fund. In 1997, it was actuarially computed to last 65 years. By the end of 2002, however, the life of the fund was computed to last for only 32 years. At such rate of decline, an average of six actuarial years per calendar year, we were only looking at six to a maximum of seven years for the pension fund.

Mending old ways

We studied our options. We can take the easy but destructive path of maintaining the status quo and let the succeeding administration deal with it later. Anyway, the status quo has been existing for several decades and we certainly cannot be blamed for the sins or omissions of the past. Or we can take the difficult, painful and unpopular path of reform, while we still can, and suffer in silence the ire, outcry and angry condemnation of those who will surely be affected by these reforms.

The management and the Board of Trustees of your the GSIS Retirement Law and the basic precepts of social insurance, they decided to lay down and implement immediately the following measures:

First, a computerized system of matching the benefits to be received by a member with the premiums actually paid or remitted to the System on his behalf on the basis of what is reflected in the System's computerized database. Thus, for purposes of computing the benefits under the social insurance laws administered by the GSIS, a member's period of service in government will only be recognized as creditable service if the monthly compulsory premiums corresponding to said period have been actually paid and remitted to the System. This is now known as the GSIS Premium-Based Policy.

Second, in recognition of the fact that loans to members are investment activities of the System in order to maximize the returns and improve its solvency, every effort to collect these loans from members, whether judicial or administrative, were resorted to by the GSIS. Thus, aside from resorting to judicial processes, such as foreclosures of housing accounts in default, the GSIS decided to adopt the Claims and Loans Interdependency Policy or CLIP. Under this policy, loans in default or overdue loan amortizations of members must first be deducted from the proceeds of new claims or loans of members in order to update them and only then shall the net proceeds be released to them.

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February 2-3, 2004
LYCEUM NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY
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GSIS president and general manager Winston F. Garcia's well-applauded speech in the 1st Philippine Social Security Association (PHILSSA) convention brought to light how the reforms he has instituted in GSIS ultimately lengthen and strengthen the life of the Pension Fund.

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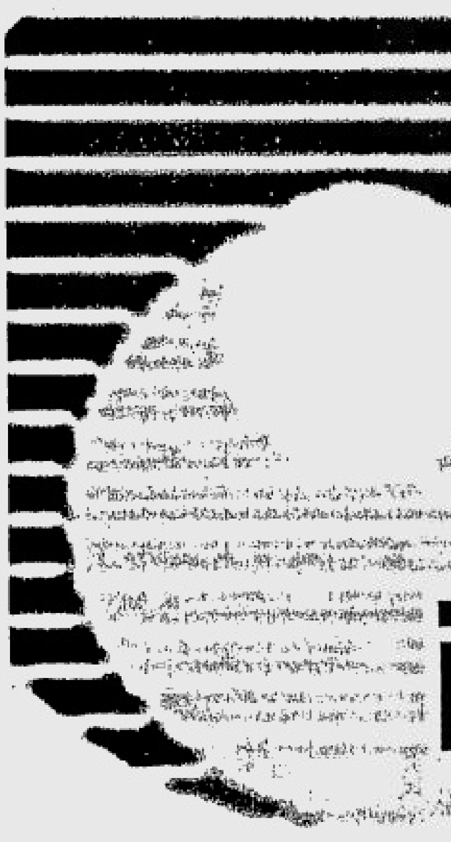

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Gloria visits INC central but fails to see Ka Erdie

From page A1

According to Bunye, Ms Macapagal met Manalo's son Eduardo, INC deputy executive minister, and other church officials to discuss the possible distribution of "Gloria Rice" (a hybrid rice variety which yields bigger production than normal rice) to INC farmers in Bulacan and Nueva Ecija.

He said Ms Macapagal, who was accompanied by Agriculture Secretary Luis Lorenzo and Defensor, decided to push the "Gloria Rice" to INC because the group was well organized and had many members engaged in farming.

Ms Macapagal, a devout Catholic, is banking on the support of different religious groups to boost her chances of staying in Malacañang until 2010.

But Bunye denied that Ms Macapagal had intended to seek Manalo's blessing and support during the meeting.

Even though Ms Macapagal did not meet the INC leader, an estimated 1,000 church members inside the headquarters shook hands with Ms Macapagal, Bunye said.

INC members interviewed by the INQUIRER said they only learned of the Ms Macapagal's visit through radio reports. Some said there was a "commotion" inside the religious group's Quezon City headquarters in the morning.

No endorsement?

INC, one of the major religious sects in the Philippines, is not likely to rally behind a woman president as the church interprets certain biblical teachings to mean that a woman is not supposed to lead a nation or a tribe.

In 1986 the INC almost split its flock when it ordered its members to vote for former dictator Ferdinand Marcos who was running against Corazon Aquino, widow of the late Sen. Benigno Aquino Jr.

Despite the circular, almost half of the INC members voted for Ms Aquino. Because of the sheer number of violators, the leadership could not excommunicate them and instead ordered them to write a letter of apology to the INC administration.

There were reports in the past that the INC was inclined to back Lacson or Poe.

Bienvenido Santiago, INC spokesperson, could not be reached for comment as of press time. The group's external affairs officer, Isaias Samson, said he did not know the details of Ms Macapagal's visit.

Poe 'A' team pooh-poohed

From page A1

think tank did not "strike" him so much because he was looking for more "seasoned personalities" in the team to help Poe run the government and manage the economy.

Rep. Francis Escudero, Poe's campaign spokesperson, on Tuesday named a 19-member team of economic, governance, international relations and education experts tasked with drawing up the actor's blueprint for economic development.

The team reportedly includes Raul Fabella, UP School of Economics dean; Bernardo Villegas, Harvard-trained economics professor; Paul Pangalanan, UP College of Law dean, and former Education Undersecretary Victor Andres Manhit, among others.

"I know many of the personalities cited and they are certainly qualified. But I wish there were more with actual experience; most of them are academicians," Donald Dee, Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry vice president, said.

Good in theory

Francis Chua, Federation of Filipino Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry executive vice president, said: "They have very impressive scholastic achievement; they are good in theory. Unfortunately, except for a few, they do not have the practical experience."

He said it remained to be seen whether the advisers could overcome Poe's lack of economic background. "The proof of the pudding is in the eating."

Philippine Exporters Federation president Sergio Ortiz-Luis said that individually, Poe's advisers were "fine choices" because businessmen have had dealings with most of them in the past.

However, Ortiz-Luis said that good individual players did not necessarily mean a good team. "It all depends on the coach (Poe) to harness talents and choose from their various ideas. It's up to Poe whether these individuals could work as a team," he said.

Best trainers but ...

Presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said that like a boxer, Poe could have the best trainers in the corner. "But once he is out in the ring, he is entirely on his own," Bunye said.

He explained that a president must at least have some experience in governance or background in business to help in making decisions.

But are they really his economic advisers?

The camp of Alyansa ng Pag-asa standard-bearer Raul Roco wants to know if Poe's 19 advisers have indeed committed to serve him should he win.

"We'd like to get more truthful statements from them. We'll be happy if we could get them all in a picture-taking," Jaime Galvez-Tan, Roco's political adviser, said in a phone interview.

A bluff?

Tan recalled that the camp of the actor earlier announced that Roberto "Bobby" de Ocampo, among others, was part of their team of advisers, but the economist had denied it a number of times.

"This could just be a PR, a bluff. They might eventually back out," he said.

Roco has his own team of economic advisers, who hold degrees at the Asian Institute of Management, work at the Asian Development Bank or have experience in government work, according to Tan.

But Tan, a former health secretary, declined to name them, saying they wanted to remain anonymous for now.

Ka Kiko signs off; 69

From page A1

EVANGELISTA

tal in Quezon City where he had been confined since Feb. 7. He would have turned 70 on July 24.

Fondly called "Ka Kiko" by his friends, colleagues and the public, Evangelista enjoyed the reputation of carving a career for the ABS-CBN network that spanned its entire 50-year history. First hired as a radio personality, Evangelista rose to become a vital force in the network's prime television shows.

During the pre-martial law years, Evangelista was the executive producer of the comedy show on television, "Super Laff-In," a takeoff on the hugely popular Martin and Rowan Laugh In show on American TV in the late '60s.

Original anchor

Shut down by the Marcos regime with the proclamation of martial law in 1972, ABS-CBN reopened after the historic 1986 Edsa Revolution with Evangelista as one of the original anchors for the early evening Filipino newscast, "TV Patrol," with Noli de Castro and Mel Tiangco. "TV Patrol" revolutionized the format of local television news and continues to be a top-rating news program to this day.

Evangelista anchored the "Hoy Gising" segment on "TV Patrol," which later evolved into a full-length program hosted by Ted Failon. The segment was revived this month on "TV Patrol," with Julius Babao as anchor.

"The entire ABS-CBN family is saddened by the news about our friend Frankie," said ABS-CBN vice chair Jake Almeda Lopez. "In a very true sense, he was one of the nicest fellows that I have met here in ABS-CBN. We were colleagues even before martial law was declared and he was one of the most professional of our broadcasters. ABS-CBN joins his family in this hour of grief."

Before he was hospitalized, Evangelista was a news anchor on the ABS-CBN News Channel (ANC), where he also hosted a show, "Dateline Philippines," and anchored hourly newscasts. He was also heard on his radio talk show, "Hoy Gising!" on dzMM, ABS-CBN's AM radio network, and wrote a regular Filipino column, "Pulso" for the Kabayan tabloid.

Last project

Evangelista's last major project for the ABS-CBN news and current affairs department was the news documentary, "Sa Mata ng Balita," aired in October last year, during the 50th anniversary celebration of the network.

The pioneer broadcaster was also featured prominently in the entertainment documentary, "Limampung-Taong Ligawan," part of the network's 50th year celebration.

Last December, the well-loved Evangelista took time off from his busy schedule to stand as one of the principal sponsors in the wedding of his niece, actress Eula Valdez to Richard Littonjua on Boracay Island.

In his "Viewfinder" column for INQUIRER Entertainment in August last year, Nestor Torre wrote: "For our part, we're happy to recall that, many years ago, we evaluated the local news scene on TV and in our view, the best male newscaster was Frankie Evangelista. Decades later, we are pleased to say that we have no reason to change our mind."

Evangelista is survived by his wife, Patria Hipolito Evangelista, and their three children. His body lies at the Arlington Chapels in Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Cremation is set on Saturday, Feb. 21.

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- **PANEL DISCUSSION on FUND RAISING**
  Moderator: Ms. Evelyn Salire, Secretary General, Philippine Retailers Association
  Panelists : Ms. Barbara Belmont, CAE; Mr. John Graham IV, President, American Society of Association Executives; Ms. Leslie Mancuso, PhD, RN, CEO, JHPIEGO (an affiliate of Johns Hopkins University), MD, USA; Ms. Marianne Quebral, Executive Director, Venture for Fund Raising, Philippines
- **LEADING BY EXAMPLE** *by Mr. Francis Kong, CEO, Funworks Incorporated, Philippines*
- **GOVERNANCE IN ASSOCIATIONS** *by Mr. John Graham IV*
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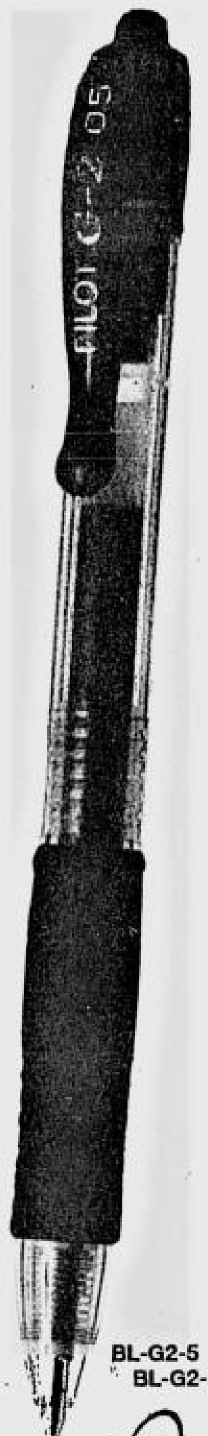

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The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Over 200 killed in Iran train blast

TEHRAN—More than 200 people were killed and 350 others injured Wednesday when runaway rail wagons loaded with sulfur, petrol and fertilizer derailed and exploded in northeast Iran, the state news agency Irna reported.

"Five villages were destroyed. The number of the people killed in this incident is more than 200," the head of disasters in Khorassan province, Vahid Barakchi, was quoted as saying.

"The level of this is massive and beyond our preliminary assessments. Our rescue workers workers are trying to remove more than 350 injured people to hospitals in Mashhad and Neyshabour."

"The explosion happened at a time when the firefighters and the rescue workers were trying to put out the fire," the official said.

"A number of the firefighters and local villagers were killed in the explosion."

The massive blast occurred at Khayyam station, near the town of Neyshabour, and was heard in the provincial capital of Mashhad, some 75 km away near the borders with Turkmenistan and Afghanistan, Irna said.

Local officials said the rail wagons, which were parked in a nearby station, began rolling away in the early hours of the morning. The wagons then derailed and a fire began with several explosions reported, drawing firefighters and curious onlookers to the scene. *AFP*

A TV grab taken from Iranian TV shows the train which exploded. AFP

Long-lost US WWII bomber found with human remains

KOROR, Palau—A US World War Two bomber shot down over Palau in the central Pacific has been found with the remains of eight missing American servicemen, authorities said here Wednesday.

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The B-24 was part of an onslaught on the Japanese-held Palau islands as the US prepared to remove a key air base before taking the Philippines, said Scannon, a research scientist from San Francisco.

It was shot down in September 1944 over the heavily fortified capital, Koror. Witnesses reported three crew members parachuting out of the plane as it plummeted into the sea, Scannon said.

They were then executed by the Japanese, witnesses said. The remains of all or some of the other eight are believed to be on board the plane.

Scannon said he and the BentProp team had searched for the B-24 for eight years, "exhausting every possible lead." *AFP*

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"Old hens that are due for slaughter" were being targeted, Goh said. *AP*

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"The police force is young, the number of police is insufficient," Neptune said, adding that it was the "duty of the international community" to step in to help.

Haitian ambassador to Cuba Marie Andrine Constant said from Havana that her government would prefer a police force set up by the Organization of American States (OAS).

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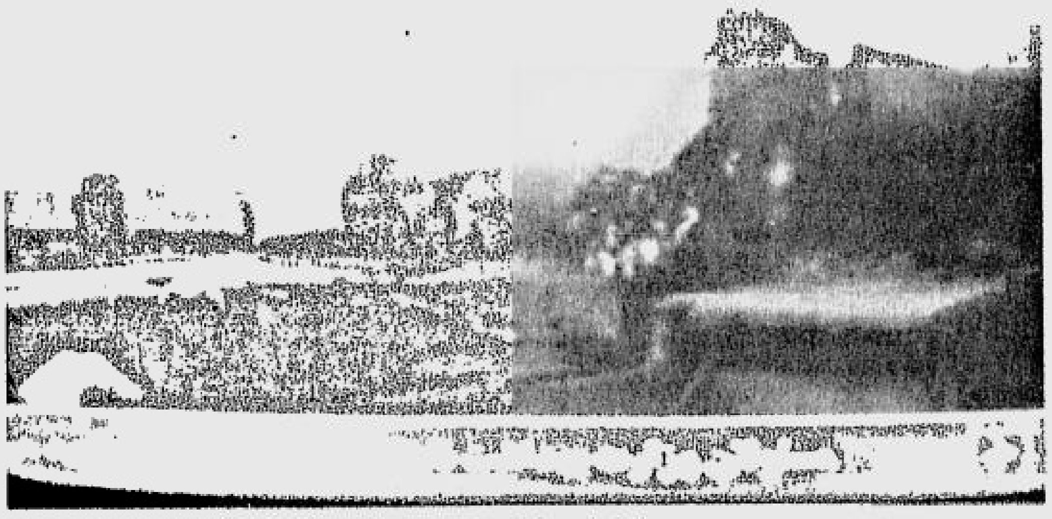

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WORLD BRIEFS

Democrat race down to 2

MIDDLETON, Wisconsin—The Democratic presidential campaign is spreading out to primaries in 10 crucial states, and it appears to be down to a two-man race between front-runner John Kerry and a plucky challenger, John Edwards. Tuesday's Wisconsin primary set the stage for the March 2 contests. Kerry emerged again as the victor, Edwards is still in the race after a surprisingly close second place finish and Howard Dean's candidacy appeared doomed after he came in a distant third. "The voters of Wisconsin sent a clear message," Edwards said. "The message was this: Objects in your mirror may be closer than they appear." But Kerry gave no indication he was fazed by the Edwards surge in Wisconsin. "We're going to win the nomination," Kerry said. Kerry's advisers pointed out that even though Edwards closed the gap in Wisconsin, Kerry still has won 15 of 17 contests. Edwards has only one, South Carolina, where he was born. *AP*

Peacekeepers to Ivory Coast

UNITED NATIONS—The United States has agreed to the deployment of more than 6,000 UN peacekeepers for war-divided Ivory Coast and has asked US Congress for approval, Ambassador John Negroponte said Tuesday. Negroponte said the request for congressional authorization was submitted last week. The United States will not contribute any troops to the force, but Congress needs to approve the request because the United States pays 27 percent of all UN peacekeeping costs. Last month, France circulated a draft resolution calling for a 6,240-strong UN force and 150 civilian police to replace the 1,000 West African troops and 150 West African gendarmes now in the war-divided nation. More than 4,000 French troops currently trying to help keep the peace in the West African nation will remain in the country but will not be part of a UN force. *AP*

Dengue kills 161 Indons

JAKARTA—The death toll from a dengue fever outbreak hitting Indonesia's sprawling archipelago has climbed to 161, said health ministry data on Wednesday. Dengue fever has traditionally been a killer across the world's fourth most populous nation, but the death toll so far this year is more than double the same period last year. The latest figure was compiled from all of Indonesia's 32 provinces, while a count of 91 dead on Tuesday covered just seven and excluded densely populated Central Java. "The number of deaths due to dengue fever from all of the provinces as of Feb. 18 is 161," ministry spokesperson Mariani Reksoprodjo told reporters. The total number of cases reported was 8,135. *Reuters*

US bares list of Iraq guerrilla leaders

BAGHDAD—The US military issued a wanted list of dozens of key figures suspected of leading the anti-US insurgency in Iraq, including a $1 million reward for a senior Baath Party figure believed to be running guerrilla cells.

The list of 32 wanted people included suspected cell leaders, former members of Saddam Hussein's military and regional Baath leaders thought to be helping the insurgency, said US Brig. Gen. Mark Kimmitt, deputy operations chief.

At the top of the list, with a $1 million reward, is Mohammed Yunis al-Ahmad, a former top Baath Party official. Rewards between $50,000 and $200,000 were offered for the others.

"He is one of the former (regime) personnel we suspect of significant anti-coalition activities," Kimmitt said of al-Ahmad. "We have reason to believe he has been running cells in certain parts of this country."

The US military has been compiling the list as it built up a better understanding of the insurgency, Kimmitt told reporters. "Some names keep popping up," he said.

Soon after Saddam's ouster in April, the military published a list of 55 most-wanted members of his regime. All but 10 of them have been captured or killed. Not all were believed to have played major roles in the insurgency.

Until now, US officials have not made public a list of suspected leaders of the insurgency that erupted after the regime's collapse and has killed more American soldiers than did the invasion that toppled Saddam. The violence, blamed on Saddam loyalists and foreign Islamic militants, has persisted despite the Iraqi leader's capture in December.

Three US soldiers were killed and six wounded by roadside bombs in Baghdad and two cities to the north on Monday, the US military said. Four US soldiers were wounded and one insurgent was killed Monday in a firefight that ended in the arrest of a suspected cell leader and eight others, officials said. The cell leader was not on the list released Tuesday.

Guerrillas have carried out a series of bloody attacks over the past week targeting Iraqi civilians and police, apparently seeking to derail US plans to hand over power to a provisional Iraqi government on June 30.

The military's new most wanted list set new rankings of rewards for the fugitives. A $200,000 reward was set for 11 former regional military and political leaders from Saddam regime suspected of "associating" or "providing support" to insurgent cells, Kimmitt said. *AP*

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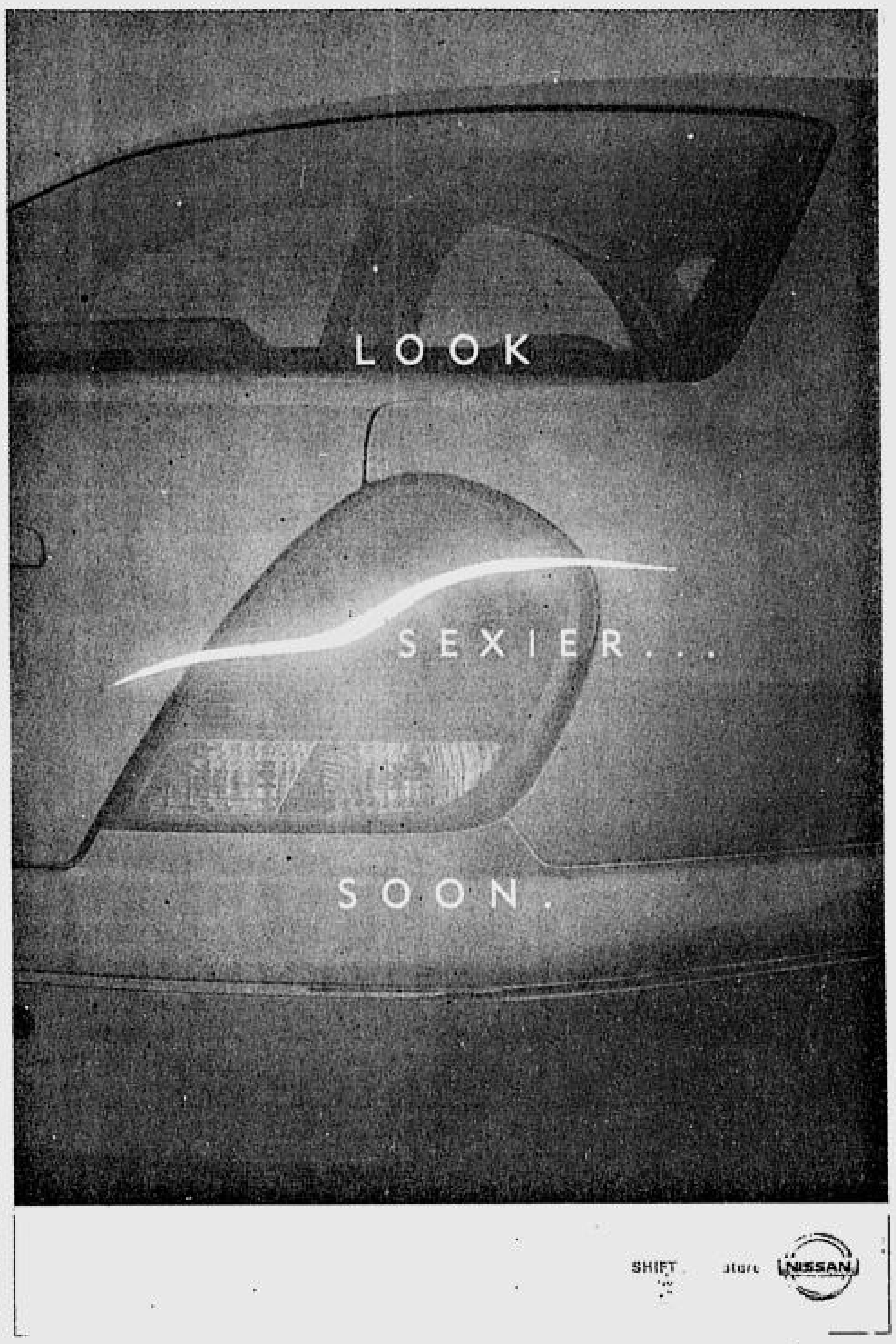

Viewers normally subscribe to cable so they can also watch programs NOT available on FREE TV channels.

As expected, there's a significant difference between cable and non-cable ratings for GMA both in Nielsen and AGB.

HOUSEHOLD RATINGS AMONG CABLE & NON-CABLE TV HOMES OF GMA PROGRAMS (January 2004)

	AGB Phils.			Nielsen Media		
PROGRAMS	CABLE HOMES RATING (%)	NON-CABLE HOMES RATING (%)	DIFFERENCE	CABLE HOMES RATING (%)	NON-CABLE HOMES RATING (%)	DIFFERENCE
PARTNERS MEL & JAY	14	21	- 7	11	17	- 6
EXTRA CHALLENGE	20	29	- 9	15	24	- 9
FRONTPAGE	18	26	- 8	14	21	- 7
S.O.P.	12	18	- 6	9	16	- 7
UNANG HIRIT	4	6	- 2	3	6	- 3
MAGPAKAILANMAN	19	27	- 8	14	25	-11
TWIN HEARTS	17	29	-12	13	26	-13
STARSTRUCK	20	33	-13	16	29	-13
EAT BULAGA	20	28	- 8	14	21	- 7
ENDLESS LOVE II	19	32	-13	15	30	-15
SIS	8	14	- 6	5	12	- 7
IMBESTIGADOR	24	33	- 9	17	26	- 9

Isn't it unusual that the selected ABS-CBN competing programs rate as much as or even exceed their non-cable ratings in AGB but not in Nielsen?

HOUSEHOLD RATINGS AMONG CABLE & NON-CABLE TV HOMES OF COMPETING ABS-CBN PROGRAMS (January 2004)

	AGB Phils.			Nielsen Media		
PROGRAMS	CABLE HOMES RATING (%)	NON-CABLE HOMES RATING (%)	DIFFERENCE	CABLE HOMES RATING (%)	NON-CABLE HOMES RATING (%)	DIFFERENCE
Cable ratings EXCEEDING or EQUAL to Non-cable ratings						
SHARON	21	19	+2	12	17	-5
NEXT LEVEL NA GKNB	31	30	+1	17	23	-6
TV PATROL	30	29	+1	17	24	-7
ASAP	16	15	+1	9	15	-6
MAGANDANG UMAGA BAYAN	6	5	+1	3	4	-1
MAALAALA MO KAYA	25	25	0	13	21	-8
Cable ratings close to Non-cable ratings						
BASTA'T KASAMA KITA	32	33	-1	17	26	-9
IT MIGHT BE YOU	32	33	-1	19	26	-7
MASAYANG TANGHALI BAYAN	14	15	-1	7	14	-7
SANA'Y WALA NANG WAKAS	32	34	-2	18	25	-7
MORNING GIRLS	12	14	-2	6	13	-7
MAGANDANG GABI BAYAN	24	28	-4	15	23	-8

GMA NETWORK

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Editor in Chief **Letty Jimenez-Magsanoc**
Managing Editor **Jose Ma. D. Nolasco**
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EDITORIALS

Money matters

THE SUBJECT of money will naturally come up time and again in this election campaign. More than the issues—a reasoned discussion of which should govern the exercise, at least in an ideal setting—the subject of money acquires critical importance particularly because of the dearth of it among the teeming mass (including those who legally cannot, or actually can't be bothered to, vote). Money, or the lack of it, marked the kickoff of the campaign period on Feb. 10 (lavish productions to rival TV extravaganzas by certain camps, simple ceremonies in others). Money, or a surfeit of it, is expected to make things happen as it has done in past elections (else what are ward leaders for?).

This is not being cynical; this is just to reflect the fact that, historic events notwithstanding, stasis rules this neck of the woods. For proof of stagnation, check out the show-biz glitter that continues to make up the strategy of the camps with apparent ample resources—a clear pandering to the craving for circus among those who have what amounts to nothing and little else beyond booze to kill time with.

Also consider the current scuttlebutt on the allegedly dry money taps in the camp of movie idol Fernando Poe Jr., purportedly resulting in the abrupt fadeout of the fellow functioning as conduit to the main moneybags.

Or chew on the multimillion-peso figures dropping from the lips of parties in the know, figures supposedly offered to, received, or demanded by certain candidates in exchange of acceptance, withdrawal or a shift in alliance. Some names are named, some are not. Still, the figures are truly scandalous in a country where, whether in the cities or in the sticks, women breed children in squalor and men get their kicks from cheap drugs and celluloid dreams.

Money talks

OUT here where a sea change has yet to be witnessed in political practices (manual instead of automated polls; leaders who think nothing of breaking promises, whether these concern running for election or lifting the moratorium on capital punishment; defections, turncoatism and eyebrow-raising alliances), the practice of the time-tested tradition of vote-buying should not come as a surprise. Indeed, if the campaign features the obligatory circus, why shouldn't it be accompanied by bread?

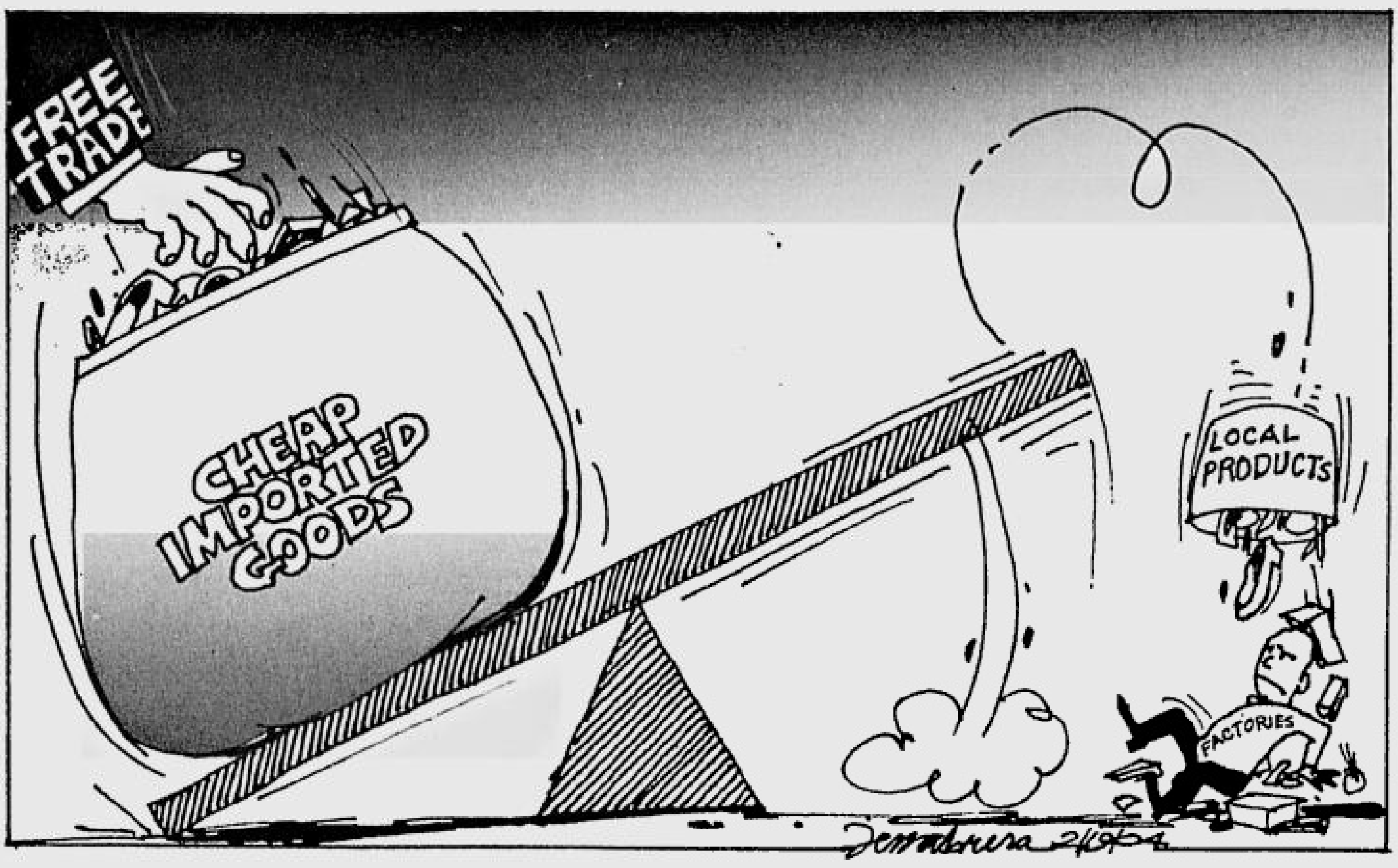
The stink of suspicion becomes quite pronounced in the turgid air where fabulous sums flit about.

Raul Roco of the Alyansa ng Pag-asa, by his own earlier admission no beneficiary of big money, is harping, correctly, on money and the supposed extent that it rules the campaign. He questions the projected campaign costs of two of his rivals, supposedly P2 billion for Poe and P5 billion for President Macapagal-Arroyo, and urges the electorate to reject those with that kind of money to burn. He holds up his own plan to conduct a nationwide campaign for his party on P105-200 million, well within the legal limits, and is quick to say that even then, he would be loath to spend such an amount given the poverty in which most Filipinos live.

The law declares limits to campaign time and campaign spending. The Commission on Elections, as though to save face from the deeply flawed contract for automated counting machines that the Supreme Court had voided, insists on common areas for campaign posters and has displayed audacity in tearing down those put up by overzealous minions, including those sent by Malacañang.

But there is nowhere for earnest voters to look if they want to know, for example, the identities of the private donors that Michael Defensor had said were funding Ms Macapagal's campaign, or of the names of those who want Poe, Roco, or Sen. Panfilo Lacson, etc. to become president. And, most important, by how many reasons. There is no way to check who the high rollers are betting on (in which case, they should be the ones to watch when their candidate makes it) or if they are shrewdly putting their money on all the horses (which will make them constant suspects).

TV advertisements, posters and banners are fine, if one ignores the reality that they enhance the boob-tube wasteland and clutter the landscape. But the fact is that money talks in these parts where the peso continues to shrink and herald even more desperate times. And voters are known to vote with their stomachs.



Plaza Miranda goes cyber

Viewpoint

Juan L. Mercado

"CAN we defend this in Plaza Miranda?" The late President Ramon Magsaysay used this device to ventilate dubious proposals in Quiapo's version of Hyde Park. Transparency ensured accountability.

But Plaza Miranda, since then, has gone cyberspace. "One out of every four Filipinos today uses a mobile phone," Smart Communications' Ramon Isberto says. "There's an estimated 21 million plus phone users out there."

About 17 million messages go by text daily, just from two companies. A "penetration rate" of 27 percent may crest at 33 percent by 2005.

Minutes after the "Craven Eleven" sealed the impeachment's "second envelope," text messages and e-mail exploded. An unforeseen "political trigger" sent infuriated citizens boiling into the streets.

Eduardo Cojuangco's "Brat Pack" recklessly tried to impeach Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. The corrupt indicted the exemplary. A similar electronic outburst helped squish that aberration.

The Internet is a borderless Plaza Miranda—open to 6.4 million Filipinos, scattered in a 120-country diaspora. From all over, people text, e-mail or phone their disgust, fears—and jokes. "Fernando Poe is an American," says one, "because his mother is Winnie the Poe."

Newspaper webpages, like INQ7.net, enable Filipinos from Jeddah to Los Angeles and Hong Kong to react within minutes—something Plaza Miranda crowds never dreamed of.

The Internet also reveals what bugs people: from concern over FPJ's glaring lack of qualifications to distaste for Marcos and Erap cronies—and a dwindling of hope.

"I want to respect my president, not to make me laugh when I hear him on TV," S. Almagro wrote from Las Vegas, after hearing FPJ's incoherent TV interview. "I want to talk about my president to foreigners without being embarrassed, without saying: 'Well, Filipinos aren't the most mature electorate.'"

"I click on my on-line newspaper. And there's Poe, sycophants rallying to his side," says "The Looming Catastrophe" writer. "They'll trample him dead, in the end, with us, underfoot..."

"FPJ's a harbinger of disaster," says Joel Rocamora's paper, bounced back from Connecticut and Hong Kong. If disqualified, his followers threaten to riot. If he wins, his incompetence invites economic disaster, as Marcos and Erap cronies reduce him to a figurehead.

Others seethe with clenched-teeth fury. "Marcos stole my future," a 75-year-old lawyer quotes his graduating daughter. His family of professionals pulled up stakes. And his wife left to care for them as Estrada continued Marcos' plunder. My remaining children will go when I die, he added.

"The quality of our leaders is deplorable," Baguio high school student Melissa Albano e-mails. "Elections are systematized bribery. I'm tempted to migrate but don't want to. Is there any hope?"

Cyberspace Plaza Miranda reflects a deepening concern that long deferred hope may be petering out.

"Hope is a good breakfast," Francis Bacon wrote. "But it's a bad supper."

On the Net, the Ateneo Honors speaker is quoted: There are now over 400,000 prostitutes in the country. "That's how hungry we are."

But national security concerns are no longer the traditional insurgencies of Jose Maria Sison or Nur Misuari. It's about hunger and frustrated expectations. Grass-roots change may be too late, when food riots erupt.

The incoming president inherits a polarized country, strapped with an unparalleled budget deficit. And the peso will, by necessity, devalue.

By long distance, aging commissars wage a "people's war" from the bourgeois comfort of The Hague. But like detested capitalists, Ka Roger and comrades work by Deng Hsiao-Peng's axiom: "It is glorious to be rich." Thus, the preference for "permit-to-campaign" levies.

Will they heed "peace talks"?

With proliferating fronts, the communists would move in, after an urban rebellion. Will the military impose "order," ignore constitutional values to install recycled caudillos?

"Military-dominated governments are the least likely to respond to the needs of the impoverished," the Swedish Institute of International Affairs cautions. "The army merely ploughs the seas."

Only 14 out of every 1,000 Filipinos have a computer, apologists scoff. Singapore has 399.

Loren Legarda dismissed her Assumption batchmates' disappointment, sniffing: They're only one percent of the electorate.

Should the future vindicate your choice, "I pray for the grace to apologize to you," a classmate snapped on the Net. "But first, I pray that, for the sake of our nation, you and your running mate may lose."

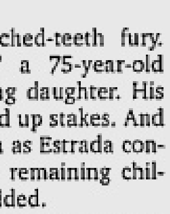
"You can't eat hope," commentator Leandro Coronel writes. Yet, many hope the elections will reverse the skid.

"If you keep green boughs of hope in your heart," the Chinese say, "the singing bird will come."

The 'wasted vote'

There's the Rub

Conrado de Quiros



ON SEVERAL occasions these past weeks, friends have raised the issue of the "wasted vote." Raul Roco, they say, may be out of the running, having already slipped to third, if one goes by the Social Weather Stations survey. Whatever the reason, he may soon be hard put to catch up with either FPJ or GMA. A vote for him would be *sayang*. Better if one just voted either for FPJ or GMA, depending on who one thinks is the lesser evil.

Well, first off, the premise is wrong. I myself suspect this line is something the GMA camp is peddling, its strategy being first to take Roco out of the running in the public eye, reducing the contest to a choice between GMA or FPJ, and second to drumbeat enough fear of FPJ—he will be Erap Part 2—to drive the voters to GMA.

I myself do not buy it. I've already advanced my theory on the last SWS survey which had GMA climbing to second and Roco slipping to third. I think it was the combined result of Noli de Castro running as GMA's partner and Roco having near-zero visibility in media for a couple of months before the survey came out. The last time Roco landed on the front pages of newspapers was when he launched the Alliance of Hope on National Heroes Day. Since then, nothing.

The next surveys may yet produce changes in the rankings of the presidential candidates for a couple of reasons. First, the Noli factor would already have been factored in by the public. It would have lost its novelty and impact. And the perception that GMA is resorting to dirty tricks—ousting FPJ through the citizenship issue, appointing two known scalawags and diehard supporters to the Comelec, prosecuting the Kawal officers for saying she ordered her favorite generals to derail the campaign of the other candidates—could boomerang on her, bringing her back to the same position she occupied before.

And Roco has been gaining media mileage of late. His visibility has increased.

If the question were merely "winnability," I should think the wasted vote would be the one thrown to GMA. I can't see how she can win against FPJ. Like I said before, she has never topped a survey. And despite campaigning for three and a half years (that is what she has been doing all this time, with those giant billboards proclaiming her virtues) and resorting to below-the-belt tactics (these elections are threatening to become dirtier than when Marcos sought a second term in 1969), all she has to show for it is that she is now "within striking distance" of FPJ. In past presidential contests, the incumbent was the candidate to beat. All the rest tried to be within striking distance of him. This is the only case I know where the incumbent is claiming to be within striking distance of a challenger.

But far more importantly, I don't buy the concept of the "wasted vote." The only wasted vote as far as I can see is the one you give to a candidate you do not believe in simply because you think he or she has a chance to win. That is boundless waste, not least because it stands to waste the country. To this day, I do not regret not having voted for Erap in 1998. To this day, I do not see that I wasted my vote voting for somebody else. If there was any "wasted vote," it was the one that went to Erap. That is so not just because he never got to finish his term but because people voted for him simply because "he was going to win anyway" whatever they did. People who do not want to appear like fools by voting for a "weak candidate" are on a straight path to it.

Correspondingly, the wasted vote is the one you do not give the candidate you believe in from the belief that he is "not likely to win." That is a self-fulfilling prophecy, guaranteeing doom—and not just for your candidate. Like I keep saying, the only thing worse than being disempowered is having the power and not knowing you do. Or worse, knowing you do and abdicating it. The vote is a great power, and it is something we hold in our hands. The victory of candidates is not written in the stars, it is written in our hearts. The victory of candidates is not foreordained, it is decided by us. We do not vote for candidates, they do not win. We vote for candidates, they win.

Even if the candidate you believe in is not a popular one, what of it? Voting is not just something you do for a candidate, it is something you do for yourself. Or to yourself. Elections are a test of character, but it is not just a test of character for the candidate, it is a test of character for the voter, too. It's not just the candidate who's on trial in elections, it is you, too. When you vote, you do not just decide the kind of life you want for the nation, you decide what kind of life you want for yourself. You can choose either the life of a lemming and throw yourself off a cliff because everybody is doing so or the life of a human being and act as reason and conviction tell you to.

At the end of the day, you do not just have to live with the candidate you inflicted on the nation, you have to live with yourself and the wound you inflicted on yourself. You can't be true to yourself, you can't be true to the nation. Stop complaining about this country going nowhere. There is no vote that is wasted on a candidate you believe is fit to run this country, whether he wins or not. You do not win when you vote a fool or a tyrant into office because he or she is the "strong candidate," you lose—even if he or she wins. Above all when he or she wins. And you do not lose when you vote for a candidate as your conscience bids, you win—even if he or she loses. Above all if he or she loses: It is but the beginning of struggle.

The "wasted vote" is a spurious concept. You keep worrying about it, you're wasting your time, your energy and your life.

Postpone decision until after elections

THE ADMINISTRATION should avoid wading into too many controversies in this election season. One controversy it doesn't need is the disposition of the pieces of Philippine government property in Japan. This subject has always stirred controversy because each time an administration tries to dispose of those assets, it gives rise to suspicion that some people are going to make a killing in kickbacks. Now in the election season, the suspicion is heightened that there will be a "midnight deal" to deliver some fast bucks to the Palace. Hence the warnings of Senators Manuel Villar and Joker Arroyo make sense: it would be good to postpone any decision on those assets until after the elections.

But Congress has to be castigated as well. If, as Villar insists, the disposition of those assets needs the approval of Congress, why after all these years has Congress allowed them to waste away in land-starved Japan, where such property is at a premium? For the Philippines, whose people cannot free themselves from the bondage of poverty, to sit on the full development of those Japan assets is absolutely criminal.

Political Tidbits

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

* * *

Negative reports about public officials, especially on fiscal spending, have become prevalent, so it was a breath of fresh air to read recently that Senator Arroyo has for the 12th straight year been the "Scrooge" of Congress. He has spent the least of taxpayers' money among the senators in 2002, a record he established while he was in the House for three terms, and now in the Senate as a first-term senator. Arroyo spent P8.1 million while the highest Senate spender, Sen. Vicente Sotto, disbursed P12.6 million in 2002. That means a difference of P4.5 million. There is a joke that Joker P. Arroyo's middle name is "Parsimonious."

Senators have the same expenditure ceiling, and it makes citizens wonder where Sotto spent that P4.5 million difference. Not on his very gorgeous suits, I hope, which makes him indisputably the most dapper of all the senators.

* * *

The Commission on Audit report would indicate that neither the majority nor the minority in the Senate has the monopoly of thrifty members or spendthrift senators. For instance, opposition presidential candidate Sen. Panfilo Lacson has waived his 2003 pork barrel, though he collected them for the first two years, whereas Arroyo has not bothered to touch his at all. And in these times of chronic absenteeism especially in the House, incoming congressmen could learn a bit from Arroyo's 100-percent attendance record during his nine years in the House. In the Senate, he and Sen. Juan Flavier have the best attendance record, and incidentally, the pint-sized Flavier is also the second most frugal senator.

* * *

A very notable speaker, because of the import of his message in our violence-marred Filipino society and the world threatened by terrorism, is Dr. Glenn D. Paige, president of the Center for Global Non-Violence (CGNV) in Honolulu and professor emeritus of political science at the University of Hawaii. Paige, who will speak in a lecture series here starting today, is recognized internationally for his scientific study of political leadership and peace and non-violence. Paige holds that a "non-killing global society" is not only a real possibility but even attainable, and he has developed this thesis in a published book, titled "Non-killing Global Political Science," which has been translated into nine foreign languages. Here in the Philippines that book was co-published last year by CGNV and Kalayaan College at Marikina Riverbanks.

* * *

With Paige's book as the theoretical framework and reference, respected scholars and leaders from the University of the Philippines, Ateneo de Manila, Ateneo de Davao and Kalayaan College are delivering lectures and discussing the prospects, problems and challenges of transforming Philippine society into a non-killing one. These university lectures, sponsored by the Aurora Aragon Quezon Peace Foundation and the Concerned Women of the Philippines, will feature Paige as keynote lecturer. Among the participants will be Peace Process Secretary Teresita Quintos-Deles, Ambassador Howard Dee, Dr. Jose V. Abueva of Kalayaan College, Datu Michael Mastura, Prof. Randolf David and Reynaldo Pacheco of the Gunless Society.

The schedules are as follows: Today, Feb. 19, 1:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m., Ikeda Hall, Balay Kalinaw, UP Diliman; Monday, Feb. 23, 1 p.m. to 5:30 p.m., Social Development Complex Auditorium, Ateneo de Manila University, QC; and Tuesday, Feb. 24, 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., Kalayaan College, Marikina Riverbanks. All interested parties are cordially invited.

* * *

In this season of political frenzy, music, especially free music, helps one maintain sanity. Catch the Metro Manila Community Orchestra on the third week of its "February Arts Month," this time in a concert at the Francisco Santiago Hall, PCIBank, Makati, on Saturday, Feb. 21 at 4 p.m., and again on Monday, Feb. 23, at the UE Theater, Manila, at 6 p.m. Both concerts will feature Brahms, Weber, Lucio San Pedro, Dvorak and Jason Rivera. Also the German Embassy, under the aegis of that tireless music patron, Ambassador Herbert Jess, the National Parks Development Committee and NBN-4, are co-sponsoring this month a series of musical presentations at Paco Park along San Marcelino Street in Manila, in celebration of the 23rd RP-German Month. Tomorrow, Friday, Feb. 20, at 6 p.m. catch this group's presentation of an outstanding music ensemble led by piano virtuoso Nena del Rosario Villanueva, violinist Oscar Yatco, cellist Geronimo Velasco, clarinetist Ariel Sta. Ana and other members of the MPO in "Strings & Wind Harmony," featuring the music of Mozart and Brahms. Both great musical events are for free.

Life on the tracks

Human Face

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

I COULD not make it to the big-screen special viewing at the mall last Sunday, so the director lent me a copy in VHS (she wouldn't part with the DVD) that I could watch at home. But she gave me instructions in a pleading tone. I was to watch her latest film opus with no distractions, preferably in a dimly lighted room, on a big TV screen.

I followed her instructions. I went through the motion of detaching the wires from the DVD and connecting them to the VHS machine and testing if I found the right holes and the sound was right and I had the right remote with the right batteries. My, this took a while. When I was done, I freshened up.

I don't have a mini-theater, but I guess my clean and spartan room meets the specifications for viewing. What was all this ambiance-preparation supposed to achieve, I wondered. So there I was, in my cool and darkened place smelling of fresh sheets and brewed coffee, ready to behold the unfolding of Ditsi Carolino's "Riles: Life on the Tracks."

The opening scene jars and assaults immediately. A train roars past a squatter community living dangerously close to the railroad tracks in Sampaloc, Manila. Here is a world so unlike the one where I'm sitting. Cacophonous, foul-smelling, filthy, dangerous, degrading, deprived, rat-infested, unfit for human habitation. This is "home along *da riles*," no, not of TV sitcom fame. This one is true-to-life, the characters real, the misery real, the hope real but undying. *Cinema verité* with clenched teeth, and yes, with a dash of Pinoy humor.

The docu (in vivid color, in Filipino with English subtitles) has no narrator. It unravels by itself. The people don't act and talk to the camera. They are their natural selves. This is as real as it gets.

At the center of the documentary is the Renomeron family—couple Eddie and Pen Renomeron and their two kids plus three adopted ones whose parents were crushed by a train. For them and the *riles* community, the railroad tracks is a playground, a free zone for all, until those brief moments many times a day when the almighty train slices through, rattling homes and sending everyone scampering to the sides for safety.

Just as quickly as the train rumbles past, the people from both sides of the tracks reclaim their middle-space, their center. Life and livelihood thrive not just beside the tracks but right on them. For example, the enterprising have fashioned home-made modes of transport mounted on the tracks. There people do their chores and test their creativity. There women socialize and men gamble.

The family of Eddie and Pen can barely survive. Eddie sells *balut* at night, while Pen, with one breast lost to cancer (she cleans her scars while on cam), works as a day maid here and there. One gets intimate with the Renomeron family as they go about from sun-up to sundown and till the dead of night. One listens in to the petty quarrels, the meal conversations, the rough language, their thinking aloud, punctuated every so often by the sound of the passing train.

How do they get by, how do they survive on so little, how do they earn, cook, eat, bathe, fight, show love? How do they view life?

Carolino's camera does not follow the Renomerons alone. One gets to know the family better by getting to know characters in the neighborhood. One can see how prolifically they procreate. And how unabashedly they recreate. Next to television, the videoke is the most wondrous invention that has visited this community. Teenage girls dreaming of becoming entertainers in Japan, shirtless men with trembling bellies—they all have their turn with the microphone and croon to the moon. Music is the opium and aphrodisiac.

Parts of the documentary must have been shot during the 2001 election season because it shows candidates (Solita Monsod, among them) visiting the place to pump hands and win hearts. Elections have come and gone, the people complain, and there has been no improvement in their lives.

Proof is the home of the Renomeron family that would be demolished. The landlord, himself a railroad dweller, announces this rather imperiously. The day comes and the family packs their belongings as the demolition crew begins wrecking. It is heartbreaking to see them leave for another rat-infested hole.

In this portion, Carolino's camera does not solicit sentimentality, it captures details and nuances but it moves in a stoic way, leaving the viewer to either feel or think or both.

Many of us see *riles* communities only from the window of our passing vehicles when we cross the tracks and look left and right. When we see an oncoming train we step on the gas and speed away.

For a year, as a college senior, I spent two hours every Saturday afternoon in a squatter area beside the tracks along South Superhighway. This was part of the "do-it" component of our theology courses. St. Scho was tough. As sophomore and junior brats, we taught the blind and the poor kids in order to give balance to our academics and get our feet dirty.

That place by the *riles* is still the slums but it is now referred to as "Dasmariles" because not far away is the posh Dasmariñas Village. I remember a wiry woman there named Aling Asang and I have kept the photo I took of the riles kids.

I had watched and reviewed with raves Carolino's first major documentary, the award-winning black-and-white "Minsan Lang Sila Bata" which was about child labor and abuse. Duplicating that feat must have been a challenge for Carolino.

But "Riles" (70 minutes) has also earned praise here and abroad and won as best docu-film in the Cinemanila International Film Festival in 2003. "Riles" has the same Carolino touch. It is called soul.

* * *

Send comments to cerespd@info.com.ph

Inherent contradictions

The Long View

Manuel L. Quezon III

THERE is a story that says Filipino thieves are so ingenious, they once stole a propeller from a large cargo ship floating in Manila Bay.

I don't know if the story is true, but one of the biggest criticisms leveled against our country is that we are a nation of thieves. Thievery in a poor country is to be expected, and I think our society has a lax attitude toward theft precisely because so many of us are poor. The middle class and wealthy constantly complain of household help or laborers who run off with things, only to explain, if and when they're caught, "*Mayaman naman, eh.*"

This is an instinctively anarchist point of view since, as the French anarchist Proudhon put it, "Property is theft." The servant who sees an accumulation of attractive possessions or even money in his employer's home, and thinks some of it won't be missed, anyway, can be argued to be acting according to a traditional Filipino value. To put it another way, if there is plenty, then that plenty is for all. The question of course is: There's plenty, but where? If there are plenty of coconuts along a public beach, then why shouldn't everyone enjoy the coconuts? But if the coconuts are being kept in someone's backyard, to take the coconuts is asking to be lynched.

Obviously, "property is theft" only to those who do not have property; and while it is human nature to take what you cannot otherwise legitimately get, it is also human nature to fiercely protect whatever it is you have. When it comes to theft, there are mitigating circumstances: stealing food because you are hungry and cannot earn a wage with which to feed yourself, while still a crime, is much less of a crime than making a killing cornering the market in food when there is mass starvation, if you are a businessman. And as stealing goes, it is far more offensive, of course, to steal from the poor, if you belong to the poor, than for the poor to steal from the wealthy.

This is why our policemen are so hated. If every corrupt policeman stopped earning money from fining and collecting protection money from the poor, and instead concentrated on robbing the rich, you might just see the police become popular. This is also why Sen. Panfilo Lacson became popular by tightening up on cops. It also explains why his mainly law and order and specifically anti-kidnapping platform has failed to gain great popular support (think of how much more popular Lacson would be if he'd been accused of rubbing out Forbes Park types instead of the thoroughly plebian members of Kuratong Baleleng).

This is also why bribery is so endemic, and why corruption is only an effective issue if the stealing is being done by the wealthy from the poor, and not by the wealthy from the wealthy. A bribe is tribute paid by the wealthy to those whose poverty condemns them to a lack of opportunity and thus, low positions. When you come to issues concerning stealing from the national treasury, the poor join forces with the morally inclined wealthy members of society, because everyone has a stake in that money. Remember Marcos?

I have often heard supporters of Joseph Estrada say that it doesn't matter that he took gambling money, because it didn't come from the national treasury, but he got it from gambling lords who are, after all, businessmen. If presidents can accept gifts from big businessmen, the reasoning goes, what's wrong with tribute from businessmen who engage in illegal gambling in a society that adores gambling?

The problems of First Gentleman Mike Arroyo reflects this type of thinking: the weakness of Lacson's accusations originally lay in there being a reasonable doubt that whatever he'd accumulated in recent years was derived from the national treasury. If Arroyo kept savings from campaign contributions, so what? The problems of Arroyo actually began when it was whispered that he was actually engaged in looting government funds—the ferocity of the indignation in large measure due to the fact that he comes from a traditionally wealthy family. Filipinos can tolerate a lot of things, but apparently insatiable greed isn't one of them.

Here is where civil society and the churches have a problem. Civil society is against theft, in particular theft from the national treasury. The Church is against stealing public funds, too, which is wonderful. But to the voters that civil society and the Church perpetually lecture about voting for candidates with honesty, and which sees these people rallying indignantly against certain politicians, there is the nagging doubt that civil society or the churches really mean what they say. The reason for this is that the parents, spouses and children of civil society, solid members of our entrepreneurial and business classes, are the same people the poor in government and everywhere else see gladly paying bribes and haggling with the Bureau of Internal Revenue about their taxes and permits—and who give generously to the churches.

The poor instinctively realize that business is a thoroughly amoral (as distinguished from immoral) activity, which of course the poor dislikes. What they dislike, above all else, I suspect, is that if the middle and wealthy classes can rationalize paying bribes in order to prevent the disruption of their ability to make money, then what are they doing complaining about crooked politicians who grow fat, and remain fat, because of their equally fat and well connected friends in the private sector?

* * *

Comments are welcome at www.quezon.ph

Ticket to heaven

Young Blood

Anna Roxas

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

MANY people value superficial things, like the cars they drive, the clothes they wear, the house they live in, the job they have, and are never quite contented.

I am like those people. I spend about half an hour in front of my closet, making sure that the clothes (which I can never have enough of) I pick are something that I have not worn in front of the people I'm going to see. I complain incessantly about the traffic and use it as an excuse to spread my bad mood to the rest of the household. Never mind that I get home an hour earlier than those who commute. When my ex-boyfriend cheated and lied to me, I comforted myself by thinking that he wasn't handsome anyway and his car wasn't so hot. My happiness rests on a piece of paper where I have mapped out my career path. Not yet content with my MA, I have to get an MBA from a reputable school in a year or two. I have to be happily employed upon getting my MBA. I have to be an assistant vice president in a multinational company by the age of 28.

Amid all these paltry concerns, there is one special person I come home to every day who teaches me what is truly valuable. He is my little brother, but he is not so little anymore.

No one would guess my brother and I are only two years apart. I am turning 23 this year, but many say that I act and think beyond my years. My brother is 21, the year when one supposedly becomes an adult, and yet he is still a child. My brother, unlike most other children, is a special child.

He used to be autistic, which simply means a person who cannot relate to other people like you and I do. They live in a world of their own and consequently suffer learning disabilities. When my brother was autistic, he was everything but an inspiration to my family. His frenzied tantrums made the house tremble and the furniture break. He tested everyone's fortitude and patience. But after years of being showered with unyielding love and attention, he has become as lovable and innocent as a baby trapped in a man's body.

Since my brother is a child who will never grow up, many may see his situation as unfortunate. When I tell others about it, they usually respond with consternation.

To me, though, it is all a matter of perspective. If I look at him and all I see is a person who will depend on me for financial security and an abundance of unconditional love for as long as he lives and maybe demanding that I sacrifice a future husband and family who may see him as a burden, of course I would be disheartened. But I refuse to see things that way. It is a selfish, myopic and unappreciative way of looking at God's special blessing. I hope I don't eat my words when I say that I will never compromise my brother's happiness for mine, especially when my parents are no longer around to look after him. Just like a mother to her baby, I feel that as his only sister it would be a pleasure to put his needs ahead of mine.

Sometimes I would look at my brother and wish that I were a special child, too. Through him, I have learned that for as long as you love and are loved in return by people who can provide for your physical and emotional needs, being smart, successful, beautiful and rich can take the back seat. I would like to be a special child because then I would no longer have to worry about what other people think of me or strain myself figuring out how to live up to other people's expectations. I would stop pretending to like people I hate. Most importantly, I would finally be content with what I have.

Indeed, it's amazing how an intellectually challenged child has inspired me and taught me so much about life and the things that count. He brings out the best in me. One of my favorite quips is that by myself, I am going to hell, but my brother is my ticket to heaven. Without him to remind me about how good it feels to be a child, I would turn into a self-seeking fiend, out to get anyone who gets in the way of superficial bliss. He is a constant reminder to me that being a child at heart is the secret to happiness. All I have to do is look at his puppy-dog eyes, his wide smile and his Bugs Bunny teeth, and I already feel that a big weight has been lifted from my shoulders.

As far as I am concerned, I may be wearing the most unflattering clothes, I may have had the worst day at work, my buttocks may hurt from an agonizing traffic experience, boyfriends can betray me left and right, and my career can go to the dogs for all I care. As long as I have a brother who does not judge me, who accepts and loves me and my family no matter what, I am truly blessed. After all, how many people can boast of having a free ticket to heaven?

Anna Roxas, 23, is a sales and marketing assistant at GlaxoSmithKline.

Human

Jon Kevin Uy

AS a member of the Filipino-Chinese community, I find myself torn by different cultures. One aspect of this is the language I speak. Several people tout the use of Tagalog because it is the tongue of the country where I was born. "*Huwag maging dayuhan sa sariling bayan* (Don't be a foreigner in your own country)," they tell me. Others, my parents among them, demand that I speak Chinese because it is the language of my ancestors, the language that supposedly flows through my veins. Both types of people seem to be disappointed by the fact that my first language is English.

So here I am, a Chinese man living in the Philippines and yet my first language is English. I have come to believe that there are times when we place so much importance on things such as our blood and our mother country that we forget that which is most basic: the fact that we are all human beings. I feel that the concept of patriotism is incomplete. One must love not only one's country but all of humanity. I do not believe that our country is a shambles because of a lack of patriotism. Rather, the world is a shambles because of the lack of love for one's fellow man.

If I were to feel regret about not being very fluent in Tagalog it would be because I have difficulty communicating this beliefs to those whose first language is Tagalog. But there is a language that transcends all barriers of verbal communication: the language of action. Living your life with respect and concern for your fellow man is something that can be seen and understood by all, as shown by the legacy of people like Mahatma Gandhi and Mother Teresa.

I applaud the diversity of the human race. The different colors, races, genders, ages, dances, languages, clothing, food and attitudes come together to form a rainbow of human creativity and existence. While we celebrate the things that make us unique, we must also learn to celebrate the essence that binds us to one another.

Yes, I am a Chinese man living in the Philippines and my first language is English, but I am also part of a group greater than my race, gender, country, or language and I strive for the betterment of this greater community. I am a human being.

Jon Kevin Uy, 22, is a management trainee at Pioneer Insurance and Surety Corp.

TALK *of the* TOWN

Please send feedback to
jsarmiento@inquirer.com.ph

Editor **Juan V. Sarmiento Jr.**

ELECTION 2004

Bro. Eddie seeks righteous gov't

TALK of the Town is publishing today the stand of presidential candidate Bro. Eddie Villanueva of the Bangon Pilipinas on a number of issues to help voters understand his platform of government.

The stand of the other presidential candidates will be run in the succeeding issues of this section.

Talk of the Town will now come out twice a week (Thursday and Sunday) for the duration of the election campaign for candidates for national office.

We have asked each presidential candidate to give his or her position on economic, political and social concerns that we listed last Sunday as part of the INQUIRER's citizen-based coverage of the national elections.

We will also pin down the vice-presidential and senatorial candidates on their views about these concerns and what they plan to do about them.

The positions of the presidential, vice presidential and senatorial candidates on these concerns can be used to monitor whether they will abide by them once elected.

A moral gov't is the country's only salvation

By Bro. Eddie Villanueva
Presidential candidate
Bangon Pilipinas

The administration of President Macapagal-Arroyo claims that it is doing well. It claims that targets are being met, the economy is healthy, and everything is under control. We all know that this is not the case. Instead, there is almost universal consensus that:

1. We could be facing an Argentina-like situation because of our mounting debt and wide fiscal deficit.
2. We are sitting on top of a social volcano that threatens to blow up in our faces if we do not do something drastic and radical.
3. A military takeover is certainly a danger that it is a constant threat.
4. Some even go as far as predicting a bloody strife or civil war if nothing changes.

I would like to point out two glaring facts that must enrage every self-respecting Filipino who loves his country and his family, and who has any hope left.

"The government lost about $48 billion to corruption over a 20-year period, according to a World Bank Study in 2000. Morgan Stanley Research placed the losses at $204 billion between 1965 and 2001.

The amount of $204 billion translates roughly into P12 trillion. If they say that our consolidated public sector debt today is about P5.39 trillion, we would have had no debt. Instead, we would have a surplus of around P6.5 trillion. If the losses to corruption amounted to only half, or if we were only "half corrupt," we still would have been one of the richest nations in Asia.

I can safely conclude that corruption has single-handedly brought us to the brink of collapse. If we do not slay this multi-headed dragon and tear it out of our national psyche, it will most certainly push us over the edge from which there may be no recovery.

Heart of a lion

If you add to this the fact that the political leaders of the past, in one way or the other, failed to provide the leadership needed to instill honesty, integrity, and morality in government, it hardly is a surprise that our problems are now so complex and pervasive.

It is suggested that the new president be decisive and creative, and be a true leader, if he or she has to make a difference. Permit me to be more graphic. I believe that the new president must have a skin as tough as a crocodile's, wisdom like Solomon's, the heart of a lion, the patience of Job, and the courage of 10 Davids.

Today, as in many years past and as far back as President Elpidio Quirino, corruption has been the number one issue during elections.

It is because of corruption that:

- There are no jobs.
- There is grinding and widespread poverty.
- There is a gargantuan debt and a huge budget deficit.
- There is pork barrel.
- Our power rates are the second highest in Asia.
- We lack money to make agriculture a priority so that we can be self-sufficient in food.
- Our environment has been described as one of the hottest of the biodiversity hotspots.

What a pitiful country. It has even been said that we have a death wish.

War on corruption

I will declare a total war on corruption. I will wage a personal crusade to restore and bring back righteousness and morality in government.

I will lead and live by example. It is the only way that all will be convinced that they, too, must change. Then and only then can we begin to rebuild a country that is economically, socially, financially, and morally in ruins.

I will invite the best and the brightest to be part of my team. I will ask even those who did not support me, provided they have the integrity, competence, and political will to do battle with the dragon of corruption in their departments. In addition, they must turn their departments into an efficient, productive, and highly moral organization. Nothing less will do.

I know that there are Filipinos out there who will be willing, provided the leader is a person worth following, and that it is only the country and its people that must be the beneficiaries. We must also show that the rewards of corruption are low and the risk is high.

All government transactions will be transparent, and I will solicit the help of nongovernment organizations to ensure that all of these shall be above-board. No under-the-table deals.

The justice system shall be so strengthened to enable it to pursue without fear or favor anyone who violates the law. The Office of the Ombudsman shall likewise be strengthened so that it may actively work and prosecute without exception, whether police officials or private persons, who engage in graft and corruption. Both bribe giver and taker shall be prosecuted to the full extent of the law. No sacred cows.

Poverty, unemployment

The twin problems of jobs and poverty can only be remedied with investments, both foreign and domestic. Credible leadership, stable regulatory and economic policies, peace and order and war against graft and corruption will invite these investments to our shores. In addition, savings from graft and corruption will be channeled into the countryside to help spur growth in areas where most of the poor reside.

The budget deficit can only be addressed by increasing revenues through efficient collection and reducing expenses. There is no other way. We must see to it that every centavo due the government is collected. In turn, every centavo collected must be judiciously spent in a manner that will be open for all to see.

Pork barrel

I am told that Sen. Panfilo Lacson has given up his pork barrel. That is commendable. I think I will ask that all the others who enjoy this follow suit, for in times of crisis, patriotism of the highest order must be exhibited.

Globalization

It is a trend all over the world but as a sovereign nation we have the duty to fight the disadvantages and make the most of the advantages brought about by globalization. We must strengthen our capabilities to compete and protect our local industries and economy.

Power rates

We cannot compete globally if we do not address the problem of high power rates, high cost of food, and a somewhat volatile labor force.

I believe that the independent power producers are unjustly blamed as the only ones responsible for the high power rates. Remember that if the National Power Corp. did its job well and were not corrupt, the IPPs would never have been necessary. Again, corruption rears its ugly head and the "we," the innocent ones, continue to pay.

I guarantee that the guilty will be punished. We shall negotiate with all those involved in power generation and distribution to help us rationalize the industry and reduce the price of electricity. Everyone will be asked to make sacrifices in order to make life more bearable.

Agriculture

Agriculture will be a priority in my administration. Farm-to-market roads will be built, credit will be made available, technology will be provided, middlemen shall be eliminated. Local communities shall be empowered to make the Philippines sufficient unto itself in food. Perhaps, we may even export the excess like what Thailand and the other countries do. After all, once upon a time, they were learning from us. *Babangon ang Pilipinas. Maniwala ka.*

Environment

As everyone knows, our environment is a disaster. Again, we shall call upon the NGOs to provide the support needed, in the meantime, to help us clean up the mess that the past administrations so mercilessly dumped upon us and the future generations. We must preserve what we have and start a process of rehabilitation by replanting massively, cleaning up our waterways, disposing of our garbage properly, strictly implementing the laws relating to air and water. Above all, the punishment for violations will be swift and unrelenting. *Maniwala ka.*

Charter change

I believe that Charter change with respect to its economic provisions has basis for consideration. However, I believe that changing the system of government in the hope of changing our dismal situation is based on a flawed thinking that our problem is systemic. Our problem is people, and if we do not change, no system will work. Any system is only as good as the people running it. This is a proven historical fact. If we cannot change ourselves, no system will work.

People power

People power has been good for the Philippines. For lack of anything better, let us keep it in our arsenal to keep wrongdoers from totally abusing us.

Erap pardon

I cannot see my way through the issue of a pardon for former President Joseph Estrada. If we consider this, we must consider it for everyone in prison today. Are we really for this?

Marcos wealth

Let us continue to seek the ill-gotten wealth of Marcos. Only, we must do better and with more resolve and vigor. Let us also go after the ill-gotten wealth of all who have acquired fortunes through graft and corruption.

Insurgency

It has been proven that credible leadership can provide a solution to insurgency. If poverty and injustice are uprooted and addressed, communism will have no reason to exist.

Terrorism

There is no doubt that we should fight terrorism in all its forms because it is an assault on all civilized people. If we had less corruption then we could modernize our Armed Forces, and our soldiers would be treated better and with more respect, and they would have higher morale. Then we would not need the United States to help us fight terrorism.

The critics of our fight against terrorism have probably nothing better to do at this time. I do not think anyone in his/her right mind would say that we should not fight terrorism in any form.

Foreign policy

Our foreign policy is dictated by the greatest benefit to our national interest. We will strictly implement established policies in dealing with our neighbors in this rapidly shrinking global village. Our relationships with other countries shall be based on mutual respect and benefit, with the greatest national interest at heart.

Death penalty

As long as the death penalty remains in our statute books, I as President, sworn to uphold the law, will faithfully execute the laws of the land. It is even contained in the Bible that certain heinous crimes deserve the death penalty.

Supreme Court

I would like to believe that the Supreme Court performs its mandate in accordance with the law, in accordance with conscience and the wisdom that God has given them. We expect nothing less. Let us be diligent in the exercise of our functions so that there will be no reason for the Supreme Court to overturn our executive decisions.

Jueteng

I oppose illegal gambling in all forms. I cannot condone acts that are illegal. We have to provide an alternative to *jueteng*. Make our people in the countryside rich so that they will not turn to games of chance to earn a few quick pesos.

Population

Population management in accordance with one's conscience and religious beliefs is the acceptable norm. I know that this will impact on resources that are limited, but we must not only look at it from one side of the coin. We must also judiciously and wisely use our natural resources for everybody's benefit.

Divorce

I am 100 percent for family management. Let us comply with moral and legal laws. Today it is not called divorce. Marriages are annulled on grounds of "psychological incapacity." In effect, the marriage bond is dissolved and the parties are free to remarry. Let us, however, go easy on dissolution of marriage because the family is the basic unit of society and must be preserved.

Abortion

I am against any and all kinds of abortion. It is murder.

Prostitution

If our women had more livelihood opportunities we can reduce the scourge of prostitution. I am determined to find them another way of providing for their needs than selling their bodies. *Maniwala ka.*

Gay rights

God abhors homosexuality and lesbianism. But He loves the sinners as well. Let us not condemn them but give them equal rights and opportunities to develop their lives.

Education

The only salvation of this country is an educated citizenry. The future of our country is in education. But education is in such a sad, sad state. Education shall be a priority in my administration. Free elementary and secondary education with higher standards. I will raise the passing grade so our schools will produce better-educated and productive citizens. Study-now, pay-later programs for college education will be institutionalized. I am determined to find money so that education will receive the funding it deserves.

Housing, health

There is no doubt housing is needed. More jobs means more people will be able to afford decent housing. It follows that a well-paid Filipino will be a healthier Filipino.

In closing, I repeat that I will provide the framework and basis for a righteous and moral government. It is the path to the salvation of our future, the only way. The past 50 years have shown what lack of morality has done to our country and people. Change is our only hope, and it must happen now. *Maniwala ka.*

ILLUSTRATION BY ALBERT RODRIGUEZ
PAGE DESIGN BY ERNIE SAMBO

SO MAY THE OFFICE OF HER EXCELLENCY KNOW THE TRUTH

Madame President Gloria-Macapagal Arroyo,

We, the members of the four agrarian cooperatives namely (WADECOR) Employees Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Multi-Purpose Cooperative (WEARBEMPCO), Central TADECO Employees Multi-Purpose Cooperative (CTEMPCO), NESTFARMS Employees Multi-Purpose Cooperative (NEMPCO), and PAHECO Employees Multi-Purpose Cooperative (PEMPCO), all located in Davao del Norte, convey our support to Department of Agrarian Reform Secretary Roberto "Obet" Pagdanganan's order in exempting from land reform the 984.3695 hectares of exemptable lands of the four Floirendo Group of Companies (TADECO, WADECOR, NESTFARMS, and PAHECO) located at Davao del Norte.

The said order of Secretary Obet Pagdanganan had straightened the erroneous decision of DAR Region XI Director, Rodolfo T. Inson when he denied the exemption of these lands. We fully believe that Director Inson came out with the said decision denying the exemption of those lands, because he was cowed, intimidated and pressured by Mr. Enrico Cabanit of UNORKA through their constant unruly picketing and irrational and relentless siege of his (Director Inson's) office. It is but fitting that Secretary Pagdanganan should reverse the erroneous decision of Director Inson because the subject lands are really qualified to be exempted from CARP coverage.

As a result of the old decision of Secretary Obet Pagdanganan to straighten the issue, our trust and confidence with the DAR, which were lost due to the decision of Dir. Inson, have been restored.

We also express our gratitude to the Department of Agrarian Reform Secretary Obet Pagdanganan, in denying the conversion of the 147.1494 hectares of CARPable lands situated at Central TADECO into an economic development zone. This move was a clear manifestation of the straightforwardness and impartial political will of Sec. Obet Pagdanganan.

We welcome his strict orders to re-examine the subject lands and conduct actual investigation to determine the truth prevailing in the area. Due to the allegation lodged by UNORKA that the application for exemption/exclusion filed by the four above-mentioned companies were decided with "undue haste" and "without the prescribed survey," Sec. Pagdanganan has sent a DAR team from the Central Office to conduct another ocular inspection headed by DAR USEC. for Mindanao Affairs, Nasser Pangandaman. Joining with him are PARO Metancop Unda, PARAD Jose Tillano, Atty. Fatima Panguntonan and Ana Castelo. Representatives from Regional Office headed by ARDO Benjamin V. de Vera with Romeo Batuigas, Isidro Lalisan and Elisa Dacula also joined the group. The PARO and MARO Offices concerned also sent 5 representatives headed by OIC PARO 1 Avelino Pulido and MARO Jaime Claro.

During the ocular re-survey and inspection, the surveying team dared under hostile weather condition – rain or shine – and the rugged terrain on February 9-10 and 12, 2004 just to thresh out the truth. It was indeed ironic that Cabanit, et al. and UNORKA declined to be with the inspecting team during the survey in spite of the formal agreement between DAR and UNORKA and the series of invitation

The lands of the Floirendo Group of Companies which were exempted from CARP coverage in the recent Orders of Sec. Pagdanganan are areas with above 18% slope and undeveloped, and others are lands devoted to livestock. R.A. 6657 Section 10 states that "*lands with 18% slope and over, and those devoted to livestock, poultry and swine raising, aquaculture shall be exempt from the Act.*" This goes to show that the conversions and exemptions orders are within the boundaries of the law and are therefore decided on merits. As a matter of fact, since 1997 to 2003, several ocular inspections were conducted by local DAR personnel and DAR Central Officials together with us in connection with the said applications for exemption/exclusion and conversion.

We also would like to inform you Madame President that the four companies of the Floirendo family had already offered for CARP coverage and in fact had already distributed to us, the genuine ARBs, more than a thousand hectares.

And for another important matter, we denounce the move of Pambansang Ugnayan Ng Mga Lokal na Nagsasariling Organisasyon sa Kanayunan (UNORKA) headed by Enrico Cabanit in disseminating wrong information of the actual situation of the land. Mr. Cabanit is not an actual worker of the plantation, therefore he could not be considered as ARB and thus has no credibility to notify the status of the lands and of the true and genuine ARBs.

It has also come to our attention that the people staging a picket in the DAR Central Office in Quezon City are not farmers from our areas, but are merely hired people by the UNORKA to create confusion and disorientation among the laborers group.

Presently, there is peace and harmony in the areas where these concerned lands are situated. The Department of Agrarian Reform has done its share in favor of the agrarian reform beneficiaries when it decided to deny the conversion of the 147.1494 hectares. Please do not fall into the trap laid down by Mr. Cabanit and his group, the UNORKA, whose ultimate objective is only to discredit and malign the office of the DAR Secretary and that of the office of the President of the Philippines.

With this positive development, we say "Todo an-DAR!" Mabuhay!

Barangay A. O. Floirendo, Panabo City, February 12, 2004.

FROM:

CTEMPCO OFFICERS

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CTEMPCO Chairman

CELSO CUBIO
CTEMPCO Vice Chairman

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WEARBEMPCO Board of Director

ROMUALDO EGAN
FERNANDO BAYLOSIS
CARLITO MATURAN
JUDY DEL MAR
ROGELIO [illegible]

PAHEMPCO OFFICERS

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NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU
Room 201, Bonuan Apartelle
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Tel. No. (074)443-9255
Fax No. (074)443-8971
E-mail: inq_baguio@inquirer.com.ph

SOUTHERN LUZON BUREAU
23 Aurora St., Old Albay District
Legazpi City
Tel. No. (052) 820-8402
Fax No. (052) 820-1274
E-mail: inq_bicol@inquirer.com.ph

E-mail: pr_provincial_news@inquirer.com.ph

Across the NATION

Assistant Editor **Tony Bergonia**

VISAYAS BUREAU
c/o Cebu Daily News
18-15 Escario St., Cebu City
Tel. Nos. (032) 233-0346/233-0349
Fax No. (032) 232-9938
E-mail: pdivis@skyinet.net

MINDANAO BUREAU
FEP Printing Corp. Bldg.
Ma-a Road, Davao City
Tel. No. (082)244-1770 to 71
Fax No. (082)244-1771
E-mail: pdiminda@dv.weblinq.com

Cops disarm militiamen backing poll candidates

LA TRINIDAD, Benguet—Police have started monitoring remnants of a militia once run by slain rebel priest Conrado Balweg, after noting that some of its members are now seeking elective posts in the Cordillera.

Chief Supt. Rowland Albano, Jr., Cordillera police director, said he also disarmed three members of the Cordillera People's Liberation Army (CPLA) when he met with the militia's various factions recently.

Fourteen CPLA members are now running for elective posts in various towns in the region, Comelec officials said.

"I cannot disclose the substance of our meeting. But I told them that (armed CPLA members) would not be allowed (to join candidates) ... once the campaign season starts. Should they do that, I will (go hard) on them," Albano said during a press briefing on Wednesday.

He said the police have started to monitor all potential flash points of political unrest in the region.

During the 1998 presidential elections, the CPLA's presence was felt in Abra where Balweg ran for a congressional seat.

During that period, tension was high because of the killings of people identified with Balweg and Abra Gov. Vicente Valera.

The military has control over a faction of the CPLA, whose members have been integrated into the Armed Forces of the Philippines, Albano said.

"I did not want to intrude into the jurisdiction of the Army, but I wanted to be sure about the region's security," he said.

The INQUIRER tried but failed to reach Balweg's widow, Corazon, a former communist rebel, who is an official of a new CPLA group that comprises followers of Balweg and those of his rival, Mayor Mailed Molina of Bucloc, Abra.

Albano also said that he talked with fugitive Vice Mayor Corey Dickpus of Lubuagan, Kalinga, through an emissary in that province. *Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Top Baguio execs defy order to tear down poll materials

BAGUIO CITY—Top city officials have defied orders from the Commission on Elections to tear down all Baguio Flower Festival posters, signboards and advertising banners featuring their photographs.

Lawyer Armando Velasco, Comelec regional director, said Comelec employees had started tearing down all posters bearing the faces of Mayor Bernardo Vergara, Vice Mayor Betty Lourdes Tabanda and Rep. Mauricio Domogan.

But Velasco said city officials had restored or replaced most of these banners and posters in downtown Baguio.

He said the officials would argue that the advertisements complement the Panagbenga, a major Baguio event, whose opening parade is scheduled this Saturday.

"It is more rational to have welcome advertisements at roads leading to Baguio, and not to have them scattered all over downtown Baguio," he said.

The official campaign period for local candidates starts on March 25.

"I was not aware there was a letter (ordering the dismantling of posters and banners). The government can simply ask the contractor to redo the advertisements," said Leticia Clemente, city budget officer and chair of the festival's ways and means committee.

No over-exposure

Noli Balatero, Vergara's executive assistant, said the banners "do not (overexpose) Vergara or Domogan unlike the government advertisements in Manila, which are as large as billboards."

"Officially, the mayor has not yet organized his campaign team, so we cannot be accused of violating campaign rules this early," he said.

In Pampanga, members of the biggest lawyers' organization in the province have asked the Comelec to order the "prompt removal, destruction and/or confiscation" of prohibited campaign materials in various parts of the province.

In its four-page petition to the Comelec Pampanga office, the Integrated Bar of the Philippines-Pampanga said election laws should not remain as "mere textual exhortations but regulations that should be strictly adhered to."

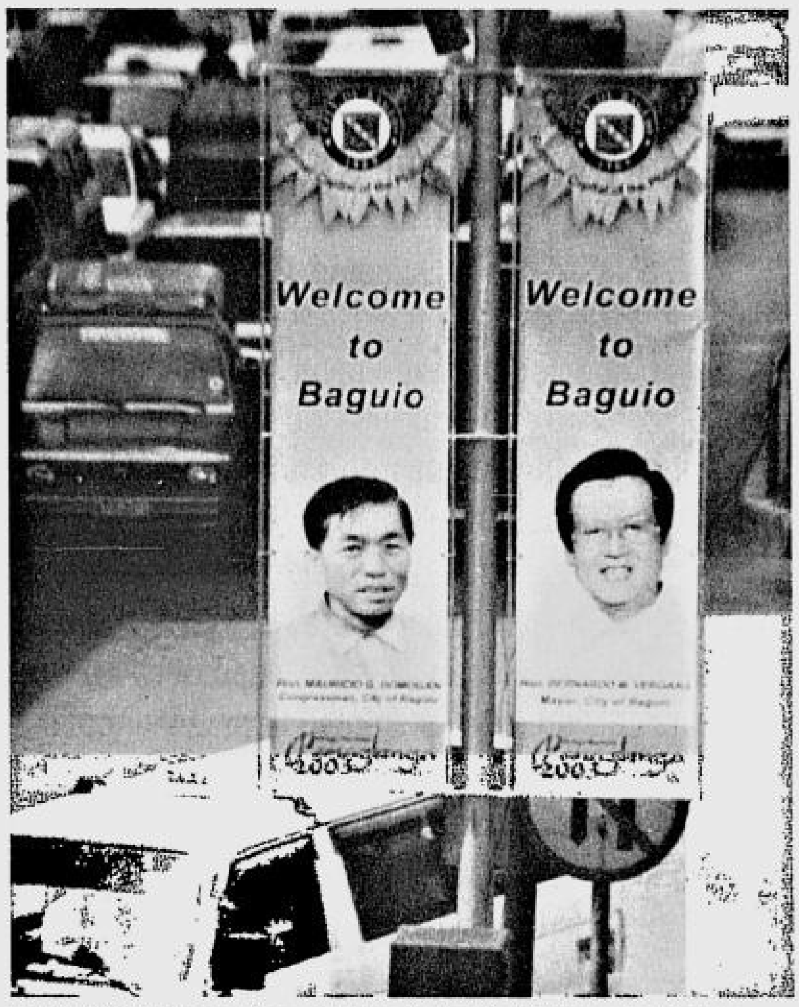
"It is the duty of the (IBP-Pampanga) to see to it that laws are faithfully observed to promote respect for the law and legal processes," the lawyers said.

Show cause

The IBP-Pampanga is also asking the Comelec to "require the candidates whose names and/or pictures appear on the said materials to show cause why they should not be subjected to disqualification proceedings and criminal prosecution for violation of the Omnibus Election Code and its companion laws, rules and regulations."

"What is more disappointing is the fact that those responsible for these violations may be the very people who court our votes to elect them to public office. As contenders for public office, these people should lead the way in showing respect for the law and not compete with one another in flouting or disregarding its edicts," the lawyers said.

The Comelec has banned the placing of campaign materials except for designated common poster areas where candidates are allowed to put up streamers and paste posters of themselves. *Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau, and Jun Malig, PDI Central Luzon Desk*



THE FAMILIAR faces at the countdown for the Baguio Flower Festival are those of the city's officials who are standing for elections and had been accused by the Comelec of violating rules on campaign materials.

TOOTS SOBERANO/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

Army says rebs to collect ₱2.5M from C. Visayas bets

By Chito A. Fuentes
PDI Visayas Bureau

TAGBILARAN CITY—The military in Bohol said communist rebels expect to collect a total of P2.5 million in Central Visayas from candidates in the 2004 elections.

This was contained in a document presented by the 302nd Infantry Brigade during the Provincial Peace and Order Council (PPOC) meeting on Feb. 12.

The report, a copy of which was obtained by the INQUIRER, was based on documents seized by the military in various operations including those left behind by fleeing rebels in recent skirmishes.

The document said for this year's elections, the New People's Army (NPA) plans to collect P2.59 million in permit-to-campaign fees from candidates in Central Visayas.

"This time, we expect that lots of money will be collected to fund their terrorist activities...," the document said.

The total amount of P2,593,863 is based on the target collection of all eight guerrilla fronts in the region.

Fronts 2 and 5, both based in Cebu, are expected to yield P973,000 or nearly half of the entire amount expected to be raised by the NPA in the region.

The second highest collection is expected from the Bohol-based fronts 3 and 6 with a total of P454,512.

The report of the 302nd IB said the rate for this year's elections was P500,000 for governor, P250,000 for congressmen and P50,000 for provincial board members.

Cagayan all set for Our Lady of Piat rites

TUGUEGARAO CITY—Everything is ready for the 400th celebration of the arrival of the image of Our Lady of Piat in Cagayan.

Archbishop Diosdado Talamayan and Gov. Edgar Lara said the celebration, which is scheduled June 4-22 and highlighted by a fluvial procession, would be led by the Papal Nuncio and representatives of Pope John Paul II.

Some 300 pilgrims are expected to join the fluvial procession that will retrace the voyage of the image from Aparri to Tuguegarao City.

The procession will pass through the towns of Lallo, Camalaniugan, Alcala, Amulung and Iguig.

Talamayan said two Cagayan folk epics would be presented to showcase local culture to bishops, priests, pilgrims and guests during the celebration.

He said the folk epic "Biuag and Malana" will be staged at the patio of the St. Peter's Cathedral here and will be participated in by some 70 student actors.

The historical play Zambali will be staged in Piat town. *Estanislao Caldez, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Party-list group campaigner slain in Mindoro

LUCENA CITY—Another leftist activist was killed in Sta. Cruz, Occidental Mindoro amid a continuing increase in military presence in the province.

In a statement, the left-wing party-list group Anakpawis identified the victim as Adrian Alegria, 21, Anakpawis coordinator and resident of Barangay Lumang Bayan in Sta. Cruz.

The group said an unidentified group forcibly abducted the victim from his house around 2:30 a.m. At around 11 a.m., Alegria's body was found floating in a river nearby.

Anakpawis chair Crispin Beltran quickly pointed to the military as the perpetrators of the murder.

"There are no other suspects here. Adrian was killed because he was an activist campaigning against militarization in Mindoro, and at the same time campaigning for Anakpawis," he said.

Beltran said the victim revealed during the first Anakpawis national convention last month that he was already being followed and harassed by the military because of his active involvement in the campaign for Anakpawis.

"He was a house-to-house sort of campaigner, very thorough. Being young, he had a lot of ideas about how to popularize Anakpawis and peasant issues. His own dreams were tightly woven with those of the people's movement. It was for these reasons that he was killed," he said.

Beltran said there were unmistakable signs that like its sister party Bayan Muna, Anakpawis was being targeted by the military and its coordinators are in danger of being killed.

"The President says that she is going to wage war against kidnappers and other criminals, then how come she won't go after members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police who have been tagged beyond doubt to be behind the killings of members and activists belonging to other cause-oriented groups?" he asked.

In a related development, Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo revealed that President Macapagal-Arroyo has ordered Defense Secretary Eduardo Ermita to look into reports of alleged military atrocities in Mindoro.

Ocampo said in his phone conversation with the President on Wednesday, he urged Ms Macapagal "to lift the reign of terror" in Mindoro.

"Although President Macapagal-Arroyo did not disclose her course of action, it is enough for the meantime that she found time to hear our complaints...," he said in a phone interview.

Ocampo also deplored the Armed Forces statement that the killings were election-related.

"Magsino and Fortu have long been targets of attack by the military because of their firm advocacy of human rights," he said. *Delfin T. Mallari Jr. PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

ANTI-KIDNAPPING czar Angelo Reyes confers with top police officers of Southern Tagalog led by Chief Supt. Reynaldo Varilla (to Reyes' right) amid a continuing campaign to prevent kidnappings, which are still a major peace and order concern of the government despite initial successes in the anti-kidnapping drive.

PHOTO FROM NAKTF

Marines sent to hunt Pentagon kidnap gang

ZAMBOANGA CITY—Marines would be re-deployed to areas formerly occupied by the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in Pikit, North Cotabato and in Pagalungan, Maguindanao, not to provoke the MILF but boost the government's anti-kidnapping campaign.

Lt. Gen. Roy Kyamko, Southern Command chief, said starting today, Marines would be moved near the Buliok complex in the Liguasan Marsh, but this would be done to boost the military's campaign against the Pentagon kidnap-for-ransom group headed by Alonto Tahir.

Tahir was being blamed for recent kidnappings in south-central Mindanao, including that of a 52-year-old grocery owner in Sultan Kudarat province.

On Feb. 11 last year, the military attacked the complex, which the MILF has been using as its main base following the fall of Camp Abubakar in Maguindanao, because of the alleged presence of the Pentagon there.

The anti-Pentagon operation became a full-scale hostility between the military and the MILF and had triggered massive evacuation.

The violence spread to other parts of Mindanao, triggering the collapse of the off and on peace process.

When the government and the MILF agreed to talk again last year, the rebel group demanded, as a precondition, the pullout of soldiers from the Buliok complex.

The government "repositioned" the troops to other areas save for a team of Army engineers working on road projects in the former MILF lair.

The total pullout of soldiers was the subject of recent discussions between the government and the MILF.

Eid Kabalu, MILF spokesperson, said the redeployment of the Marines would not help strengthen the peace process.

He said instead of the redeployment, the military could have easily asked the MILF to assist in running after the Pentagon, as embodied in previous agreements.

Kabalu warned that what happened in the past, including the mid-December clash in Datu Piang, Maguindanao, would be repeated.

Clashes occurred in the town after soldiers moved in to rescue Cotabato City car dealer Norman Sia.

Sia remains in the hands of the Pentagon.

Kyamko said the 6th Marine Battalion Landing Team under Lt. Col. Rolando Alinas would be moved in to secure residents from expected violence because of the manhunt against the Pentagon gang.

He said the soldiers would also secure Army engineers working in the area.

Lt. Col. Daniel Lucero, military spokesperson, said military engineers have been conducting humanitarian projects in the former MILF area since March last year. *Julie S. Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

E-mail: pr_provincial_news@inquirer.com.ph

INQUIRER *Southern Luzon*

Editor Jun Bandayrel
Bureau Chief Floreño G. Solmirano

Priests take on love; Sorsogon abuzz

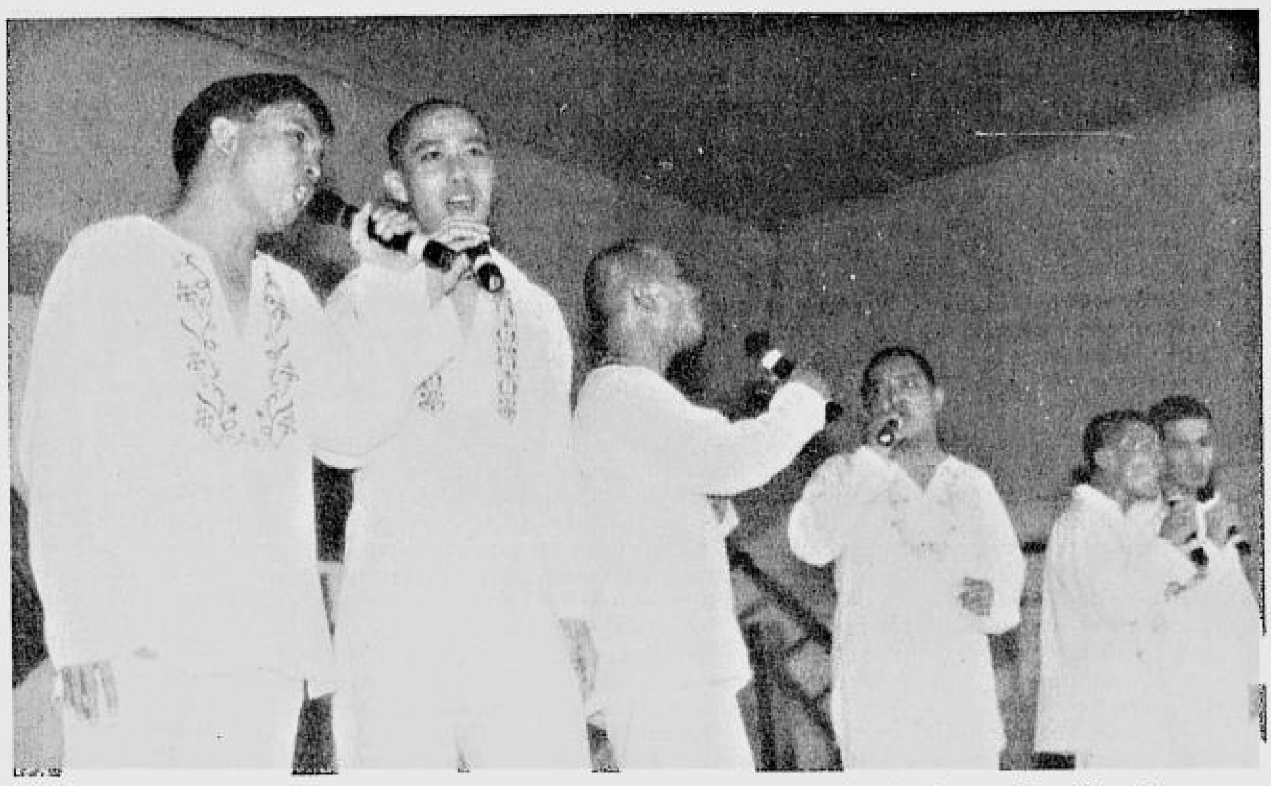
By Emir Gamis
Sorsogon City

WHO says priests can't fall in love? Six priests in the diocese of Sorsogon disagree, setting Sorsogon abuzz on Feb. 7 and sending people in droves to watch them tread where others fear to.

Minor traffic ensued as vehicles, mostly jeepneys from various towns in Sorsogon City, squeezed for parking space as the queue of spectators curved on the side of the street in front.

Posters pasted on the entrance wall shattered illusions of a mob trial: "PADS ... in love (A Benefit Concert for the Home for the Clergy)." PADS stands for Priest-Artists, Diocese of Sorsogon.

Fathers Alex Jerus, 40; Jun Elegado, 38; Edu Fulay, 36; Albert "Treb" Futol, 35; Ramil Enteria, 34; and Pat "Totoy" Alcantara, 34, were set to do the unthinkable—regale the crowd with love songs.



THE SINGING PADRES: (From left) Jun Elegado, Albert Futol, Pat Alcantara, Edu Fulay, Alex Jerus and Ramil Enteria. EMIR GAMIS

Encouraging reception

The concert, the 12th and the biggest the group has conducted so far, received a rousing welcome from the heterogeneous all-age crowd. Tickets were sold out by the time the concert started at 7:30 p.m., and others had to stay and listen outside.

From the opening number, "I love you forever," to the last playful "Otso-otso," the concert was punctuated by loud cheers and applause, and eager participation from the audience.

Elegado and Fulay's rendition of "Because of You" and "Kahit Kailan," and the group singing of "Next in Line" had the crowd singing cheerfully along.

Futol provided the vocal pyrotechnics, especially with the well-received, lungbusting "On the Wings of Love."

The crowd erupted into a wild frenzy near the end of the show, with the priests dancing and singing "Mr. Suave" and "Otso-otso," which was performed twice and had the people dancing to the ubiquitous tune.

Jerus said the good reception they have been receiving since the group was formed in 2001 had kept them going.

The PADS has performed three times in the city in a much smaller venue at the Colegio de la Milagrosa, twice in Casiguran and Irosin towns, and once in Gubat, Magdalena, Imus in Cavite, and Parañaque City.

The third performance in Colegio spelled their success. "They were sitting even on the aisles. Our third (performance) was really jampacked. Other [people] had to go home because there was no more space left for them," Jerus recalled.

Evening of love

Fr. Gerry del Prado, PADS manager, announced before the opening number that "our singing priests will lead us to remembering and reliving, a reflection on the many shades of meanings, the many faces of this thing called love."

"This evening is about love for God, love for his people, love for his church, love for the mission, love for the diocese, love for the priests, love for the earth, love for life, love for love," Del Prado explained.

Four original songs of the group from their soon-to-be-released album ("Pasakalye," "Gitara," "Awit ng Buhay," and "Shadow of God's Dream") held their own on the hodgepodge of numbers that include "Maybe," "Because of You" and "Kahit Kailan" on the mushy side; "Anak-Magdalena" medley, "Light and Shade" and "People Need the Lord" on the more serious side; and "Mr. Suave" and "Otso-otso" on the fun side.

The concert was not without its critics though, said the group.

"Actually, we got some negative feedback on the title. Some said that it doesn't sound good and seems unfit for the priests. The connotation that when you're a priest, you can't be in love ... from the conservatives," Jerus said.

The PADS, which had earlier stirred controversy for a "sexy" dance interpretation of the "Anak-Magdalena" medley in its first concert, said the title did not hint on priests breaking their vow of celibacy because of sexual offense.

"We became priests because we're in love with our vocation, no sexual or physical love," Fulay pointed out.

The concert also aimed to support the ongoing construction of the Diocesan Home for the Clergy, which will be home for the priests—elderly, retired and the sick; for bishops and curia offices, and for many diocesan gatherings—according to the group.

"It will be a home for the things that we love—a home for our dreams, a home to realize our visions," said Del Prado. The concert, he said, was "a celebration of that love."

History, scandals

The PADS was formed in 2001 during the golden anniversary of the Diocese of Sorsogon, through the initiative of Futol when most of them were assigned in the city, except for Fulay, who was assigned in Irosin.

"I had the idea to form a group of priests who could do concerts and at the same time be a permanent singing group. I know Edu and Totoy could sing because they were my classmates in seminary and the rest were also assigned in there so they could be easily tapped," Futol said.

"Pads," a term of endearment among priests and those who are close to them, was then given as the name of the group and was later formalized as the Priest-Artists, Diocese of Sorsogon.

"During the time the PADS was formed, there were so many scandals involving the church and its priests. This is our way to uplift the respect for the priests and the priesthood," Jerus said.

Saying they are not the best performers and artists the Church has to offer, members of the group said they wanted to break the myopic view of priesthood as being tied down only to the sacraments and to stir up other artist-priests.

"They are not the best singers, but they are the people who are thick-faced, people who have time, willing to give and share their talents," Jerus said.

Jerus is an instructor in the Our Lady of Peñafrancia Seminary's high school department, while Elegado is the director of the pre-college department. Alcantara and Fulay head the St. Magdalene Parish in Sta. Magdalena and the St. Anthony de Padua Parish in Polot, Bulan. Futol is the parochial vicar in the St. Michael the Archangel Parish in Irosin, while Enteria is the diocesan chancellor.

Despite their business and priestly obligations, they find time to be together and share to others their love of God, which binds them in music and fun together.

As Futol put it so succinctly: "Love is poverty because when I love, I give myself until nothing is left. So the greater our love is, the poorer we become. That's why some people refuse to love because they are afraid to lose what they have in the name of love ... But we will never be emptied (of love) because God continuously gives himself in love."

Some thoughts to ponder on during the Month of Hearts.

He wants to become Mayon's oldest climber

71-year-old says age doesn't matter in his 37th conquest

By Gil Francis G. Arevalo
Legazpi City

HE HAD climbed the top of Mount Mayon 36 times during the last 49 years, but there's no stopping 71-year-old Ricardo Dy from another conquest of the 8,000-meter volcano this year.

Dy, who is known as the "Old Man of the Mountain," wants to become the oldest climber of Mayon. "That's my New Year's resolution for 2004, that's why I'm conditioning myself physically," he said.

Those who have joined the retired provincial director of the Office of Civil Defense in his ascents wonder if he still has the energy and reflexes to climb anew. Dy would tell them: "My determination is still strong and that energizes my physical body to be strong enough to face whatever perils and challenges await me.

"If age doesn't matter in love, it is also true in climbing Mayon," he said.

Still, he admitted that he was worried: "It's the old man's sickness I'm worried about. I'm already too old to do this thing, but there's still the itch that continues to drive me to climb. Maybe that would be my last ascent."

Love

Dy made a record when, at age 10, he climbed to what is now Mayon's Camp 1 of Mayon, which is 2,700 meters high. He was then a Grade 3 pupil, but the responsibility of tending to their carabaos, goats, horses and chickens in their farm at the foot of the volcano gave him the "blissful feeling" and challenge to explore it at such a very young age.

"I fell in love with Mayon instantly—its beauty and unpredictable nature. And also the challenges and threats it possesses," Dy said.

Though he had already frequented Mayon, it was only when he was 18 years old that he was able to reach the peak. At that time, it was already a world record, and many Bicolanos thought he had an amulet.

But he admitted that the only thing he brought along with him was a simple prayer to make his adventure safe, and a bottle of rum. He climbed alone, armed with only a few gadgets.

Dy had also defied the myth among villagers of Barangay Cullat in Daraga and Sta. Misericordia in Sto. Domingo, that "whoever reaches the summit will easily be thrown into the mouth of Mayon." Cullat and Sta. Misericordia are situated at the foot of the active volcano and within the permanent danger zone.

After his success, the villagers admitted to changing their view. They recognized Dy as the first Albayano to reach the crater.

ONE of Dy's sons (right) climbs Mayon with Swiss climbers.

From 1955 to 1978, he made 23 ascents to the summit.

International explorer

Since then, Dy has become popular among local and foreign tourists and adventurers, who ask him to be their guide. Others look for him just to meet him in person and have his autograph.

Even while he was studying at the Mapua Institute of Technology in Manila, Dy had frequented Mayon.

The Department of Tourism and the OCD called him to serve as guide and lecturer because of the numerous requests and recommendations from foreign climbers.

"A lot of known international climbers really wanted me to guide them. I never thought that my name was already known abroad. They felt assured that if I would be their guide, though Mayon was erupting, we could reach and leave Mayon very safely because they knew that I had already explored the safest route," Dy said.

His very old "slum book" is a treasure of pictures and information about the climbers.

Aside from setting a record in terms of number of conquests, he has led countless rescue operations to save many villagers, especially farmers tending their crops, at the foot and his usual "visit-monitoring" of the status of the volcano. Mayon usually follows the 10-year cycle of eruption, Dy said.

Dy also experienced all kinds of perils. For instance, in one of his climbs, he did not know that Mayon was already erupting.

Adventures

On March 9, 1978, he accompanied Swiss climber Walter Job, who, at 69, was considered the oldest climber of Mayon. Dy and Job had reached Camp 1 when an advisory reached them that the volcano was erupting.

It was unexpected. As they reached the top, Dy noticed the changing color of the clouds and the rise of grayish hot steam.

DY: The old man of the mountain.

They could also hear loud rumblings and felt the sudden heating up of the atmosphere.

But the two proceeded to the summit, though Dy admitted that he feared they could lose their way back because of the thick fog. But Dy was familiar with all the routes.

Upon reaching the peak, they felt the trembles and saw rocks the size of jeepneys rolling down. They were shocked.

They heard a helicopter hovering around Mayon, and Dy immediately recognized that the director of the Philippine Volcanology and Seismology Commission, Raymundo Punongbayan, was there. Only then did he realize that the volcano was already erupting, and he was reprimanded by Punongbayan.

During that time, the route to the top was not easy, for there were towering blank walls known as dry waterfalls that hindered climbers. At a height of more than 30 meters, Dy disclosed that one needed a 50-meter rope for ascent and to hoist up the climbers and all their equipment.

Another experience involved rescuing many farmers trapped in the volcano. Dy said they had to climb even up to 5,000 meters high.

"One false move and you would find yourself at the foot of Mayon. It's very slippery even when it's not raining. You're like a speeding jet once you lose your balance, when this magnetic force quivers. Stiffness makes it really hard to carry those victims on our way back," Dy said.

Legacy

Many aspiring climbers have also considered Dy the "father of Mayon."

For others, he's known as the "stunning chicken," because he seldom or did not drink water when he climbed one of the natural wonders of the world.

It was Dy, after making 123 ascents in 1984, who institutionalized the tourist fee of $50 (now $100 or P5,500), a package which covers the entire trip.

Even professional climbers envy Dy, for all of his nine children have already climbed the summit. Dy admits that his children, aged 11 and 10, have already broken his records.

But he laments the way new guides view the charging of fees. "It seems that they don't care anymore about making good relationship with their company and the main goal in climbing Mayon. They only care for money, especially since the value of peso against the dollar is now very low. In most cases, they even charge the tourists more than the usual, and conquering Mayon is not that worth climbing anymore."

Dy said he was giving himself three to four months to keep in shape for a, possibly, last ascent. The preparations include regular exercise, seven hours of sleep daily, and refraining from alcohol.

GMA, FPJ call for calm

From page A1

cañang's efforts to foment a climate of fear among FPJ's supporters, to discourage them from participating in [today's] mass action."

"What we are concerned about here is that this extraordinary show of force could just be a guise of providing security for the event, when its real purpose is to forcibly disperse the pro-FPJ crowd and create an atmosphere of violence in an otherwise peaceful gathering," Romero said in a statement.

Maximum tolerance

In Malacañang, the President said she had put police on alert and urged Poe supporters to remain calm and allow the high court to rule without pressure.

"We call on the organizers and the leaders of those who are planning to stage a rally to police their own ranks," Ms Macapagal said in a statement, adding that police would exercise "maximum tolerance."

Lt. Col. Daniel Lucero, chief of the Armed Forces Public Information Office, told reporters that the military was ready to provide support to riot police.

"The general headquarters has issued a warning order to the NCR (National Capital Region) command and all major services to put their disturbance management teams on standby, and if ever the [PNP] will request additional troops, they should be ready to provide assistance to police," Lucero said in a press conference at Camp Aguinaldo.

He added that the NCR Command led by Lt. Gen. Alberto Braganza was ready with 2,700 men—500 soldiers each from the Army, Navy and Air Force and 1,200 from two additional battalions.

But Lucero expressed hope that no violence would erupt: "We are hoping these units will not be used. We are hoping that those who will stage the rallies will refrain from conducting any violent activity, and we are requesting them to refrain from using violence to air their partisan political aspirations."

Poe, through his campaign spokesperson Rep. Francis Escudero, also urged his supporters to allow the high court to make a ruling in peace.

"I would like to make an appeal to the supporters of FPJ to remain calm and steadfast," Escudero said. "Have faith and belief in our justice system, as well as the magistrates of the Supreme Court, that justice will be served and that the truth will be the basis of whatever decision will be made."

'High-end' motorcade

Two groups of Poe supporters are expected in today's mass actions.

The first group headed by Horacio "Boy" Morales, agrarian reform secretary during ousted President Joseph Estrada's administration and now one of Poe's campaign strategists, will hold a rally at the historic Plaza Miranda in Manila.

The second group, a "Pro-Democracy Coalition" will assemble at the Quirino grandstand between 7 and 8 a.m. for a motorcade around the Supreme Court involving at least 30 "high-end" vehicles, according to Arnold Obina, convenor of the People's Alliance for Truth and Justice.

Poe's supporters in show business and the medical, legal and other fields will take part in the motorcade, Obina said.

"Our message is simple—the campaign in defense of FPJ is not solely a concern of Edsa 3 forces," he said. "It's a unity of all social classes to protect and respect our democracy and institutions."

MEMBERS of a police anti-riot unit take their lunch inside the Philippine National Police headquarters in Camp Crame Wednesday. The policemen are preparing for a possible outbreak of violence today as the Supreme Court hears the disqualification case against presidential front-runner Fernando Poe Jr.

JOAN BONDOC

Obina said there was nothing to fear in the mass actions.

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High court to tackle 3 key issues

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Roco was referring to Poe, who is known as "Da King" of Philippine movies, and to Ms Macapagal.

The former senator and education secretary likes to call himself "The Rock" upon which, he says, the nation can build its future.

No proxy

In the case of Poe, the standard-bearer of the opposition Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino, Roco said he could bring a script, provided that the actor would personally read it in front of the audience. "No proxy. We don't need a proxy president," he said.

Roco said he would gladly allow Poe and Ms Macapagal to bring along two advisers because, he added, they were used to having assistants.

"But I suspect that [presidential candidates Sen. Panfilo] Lacson and [Bro. Eddie] Villanueva will not need that." Both Lacson and Villanueva showed up during the Focap forum.

Asked whether Poe could bring his favorite director and stage manager, Roco said: "He can bring two of his most trusted people."

But he did not say whether Ms Macapagal could make use of First Gentleman Mike Arroyo.

No lifelines

Although Ms Macapagal could have two advisers, Roco said she could not use any of her lifelines, just like contestants of the defunct game show, "Who Wants to be a Millionaire?"

Neither could she read her opening statement through a teleprompter, he said. "She should read it herself. And there should be no lifeline because if you are the President, you don't have a lifeline."

As an extra privilege to the two "royalties," Roco said he was willing to give them enough time to respond to a question raised by a panel of interviewees.

"Before answering, they are entitled to 30 seconds of concentration," he said.

Who will be the referee?

"The people," said Roco, who expected "responsible organizations" to sponsor the much sought-after debate.

And the May 10 elections will decide who among them wins the debate, he said.

Is he or isn't he?

From page A1

restrictive interpretation of the issue of citizenship as a general proposition."

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Sotto said Poe continued to supervise the lining up of campaign sorties, noting "everything is normal."

Not even a citizen

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Javier, former professor of political and constitutional laws in the Ateneo School of Law, said the subsequent marriage of Poe's parents and consequently, his acquisition of American citizenship from his mother, were not the modes of acquiring citizenship provided under the Constitution and existing laws.

"Legitimation involves the rights of the child against the parents, hence it is a matter of civil law. Citizenship involves the relation of the individual to the state. It is governed by political law, under which Poe is not a citizen," Javier explained.

But KNP senatorial candidate Aquilino Pimentel Jr. insisted that Poe was a natural-born Filipino.

Pimentel said Poe's father was a Filipino citizen when the actor was born in 1939. Regardless of the American citizenship of his mother, FPJ is a natural-born Filipino citizen because he follows his father's citizenship, he said.

The fact that Poe was born one year before his parents got married is not a bar to his being a natural-born Filipino citizen because he was recognized by both parents subsequently, thereby legitimizing him under the civil code provisions, according to Pimentel.

He expressed the hope that the Supreme Court would decide the issue without further delay so as not to cause unease among the people.

Numbers game

In the end, it is a numbers game, according to former Solicitor General Frank Chavez.

He said that although the facts and the law would be the guiding light of Supreme Court justices in resolving the question on the citizenship of Poe, their affinity with the appointing power would surely come into play.

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"That is the question because in the end it is a numbers game. Eight out of 15 (justices were appointed by her). How could Gloria lose?"

Wrong argument

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"The jurisdiction of Comelec is to determine whether there were material misrepresentations in the certificate of candidacy. But the citizenship issue has to be resolved by the Supreme Court," said Chavez.

Chavez believed that the position of Poe's lawyers that the court should wait after the May polls before it could rule on the issue was a "wrong argument because it predisposes that the candidate is qualified. But if he is not qualified, why go through the electoral process?".

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Chavez explained that the Treaty of Paris could have considered all Spaniards Filipino at the time the Philippine archipelago was "ceded" to the United States.

"But you see when the Americans took over, they required a positive act through the Philippine Bill of 1903. Americans wanted those covered by the Treaty of Paris to go through a procedure of applying for citizenship, for declaring citizenship."

As to the second question of whether Poe's parents married without any legal impediment to marry, Chavez said: "If he had legal impediment to marry, then Poe is an illegitimate child. And therefore, he follows the citizenship of the mother. And if the mother is an American, he is not a Filipino."

Retroactive effect?

He explained that marriage that took place between a father and mother, who were not qualified at the time the child was born, had retroactive effect only with respect to legitimacy.

"But it does not confer citizenship," said Chavez who added that even if Poe elected to become Filipino when he turned 18, "it can't correct this."

In the third question, Chavez said that assuming Poe was a Filipino, the SC could very well declare him a Filipino. "However, if he is not a natural-born, therefore (he is) not qualified to run for President."

He then asked whether Poe's lawyers committed a blunder when they submitted a document which in fact provided the reason for declaring FPJ non-Filipino.

Evidence against own client

"They did. They provided the very evidence against their own client. Probably, unwittingly because the 1939 documents came from his lawyers."

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GMA, FPJ call for calm

From page A1

cañang's efforts to foment a climate of fear among FPJ's supporters, to discourage them from participating in [today's] mass action."

"What we are concerned about here is that this extraordinary show of force could just be a guise of providing security for the event, when its real purpose is to forcibly disperse the pro-FPJ crowd and create an atmosphere of violence in an otherwise peaceful gathering," Romero said in a statement.

Maximum tolerance

In Malacañang, the President said she had put police on alert and urged Poe supporters to remain calm and allow the high court to rule without pressure.

"We call on the organizers and the leaders of those who are planning to stage a rally to police their own ranks," Ms Macapagal said in a statement, adding that police would exercise "maximum tolerance."

Lt. Col. Daniel Lucero, chief of the Armed Forces Public Information Office, told reporters that the military was ready to provide support to riot police.

"The general headquarters has issued a warning order to the NCR (National Capital Region) command and all major services to put their disturbance management teams on standby, and if ever the [PNP] will request additional troops, they should be ready to provide assistance to police," Lucero said in a press conference at Camp Aguinaldo.

He added that the NCR Command led by Lt. Gen. Alberto Braganza was ready with 2,700 men—500 soldiers each from the Army, Navy and Air Force and 1,200 from two additional battalions.

But Lucero expressed hope that no violence would erupt: "We are hoping these units will not be used. We are hoping that those who will stage the rallies will refrain from conducting any violent activity, and we are requesting them to refrain from using violence to air their partisan political aspirations."

Poe, through his campaign spokesperson Rep. Francis Escudero, also urged his supporters to allow the high court to make a ruling in peace.

"I would like to make an appeal to the supporters of FPJ to remain calm and steadfast," Escudero said. "Have faith and belief in our justice system, as well as the magistrates of the Supreme Court, that justice will be served and that the truth will be the basis of whatever decision will be made."

'High-end' motorcade

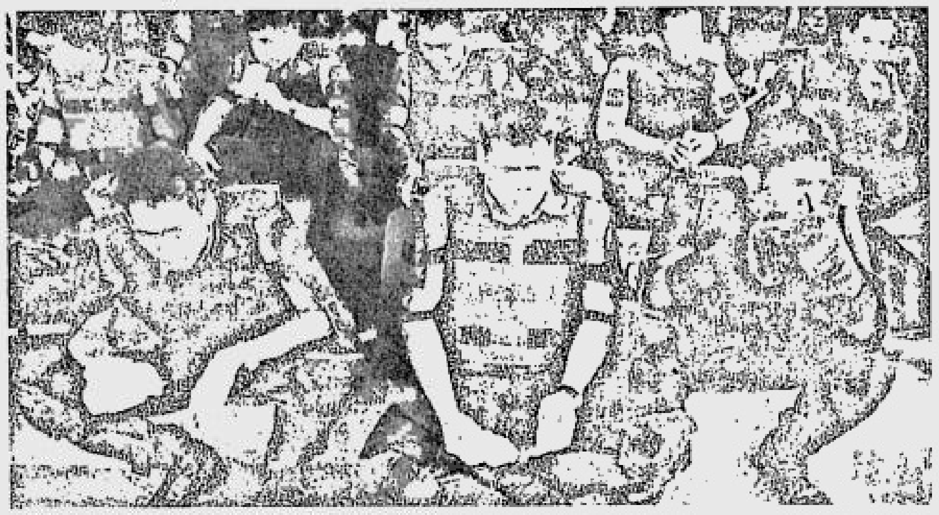
Two groups of Poe supporters are expected in today's mass actions.

The first group headed by Horacio "Boy" Morales, agrarian reform secretary during ousted President Joseph Estrada's administration and now one of Poe's campaign strategists, will hold a rally at the historic Plaza Miranda in Manila.

The second group, a "Pro-Democracy Coalition" will assemble at the Quirino grandstand between 7 and 8 a.m. for a motorcade around the Supreme Court involving at least 30 "high-end" vehicles, according to Arnold Obina, convenor of the People's Alliance for Truth and Justice.

Poe's supporters in show business and the medical, legal and other fields will take part in the motorcade, Obina said.

"Our message is simple—the campaign in defense of FPJ is not solely a concern of Edsa 3 forces," he said. "It's a unity of all social classes to protect and respect our democracy and institutions."



MEMBERS of a police anti-riot unit take their lunch inside the Philippine National Police headquarters in Camp Crame Wednesday. The policemen are preparing for a possible outbreak of violence today as the Supreme Court hears the disqualification case against presidential front-runner Fernando Poe Jr.

JOAN BONDOC

Obina said there was nothing to fear in the mass actions.

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In the case of Poe, the standard-bearer of the opposition Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino, Roco said he could bring a script, provided that the actor would personally read it in front of the audience. "No proxy. We don't need a proxy president," he said.

Roco said he would gladly allow Poe and Ms Macapagal to bring along two advisers because, he added, they were used to having assistants.

"But I suspect that [presidential candidates Sen. Panfilo] Lacson and [Bro. Eddie] Villanueva will not need that." Both Lacson and Villanueva showed up during the Focap forum.

Asked whether Poe could bring his favorite director and stage manager, Roco said: "He can bring two of his most trusted people."

But he did not say whether Ms Macapagal could make use of First Gentleman Mike Arroyo.

No lifelines

Although Ms Macapagal could have two advisers, Roco said she could not use any of her lifelines, just like contestants of the defunct game show, "Who Wants to be a Millionaire?"

Neither could she read her opening statement through a teleprompter, he said. "She should read it herself. And there should be no lifeline because if you are the President, you don't have a lifeline."

As an extra privilege to the two "royalties," Roco said he was willing to give them enough time to respond to a question raised by a panel of interviewees.

"Before answering, they are entitled to 30 seconds of concentration," he said.

Who will be the referee?

"The people," said Roco, who expected "responsible organizations" to sponsor the much sought-after debate.

And the May 10 elections will decide who among them wins the debate, he said.

E-mail: pr_metro@inquirer.com.ph

METRO

Editor Abelardo S. Ulanday

FOUR DIGIT
1 5 4 4
(In exact order)

SUERTRES
6 8 1

MEGALOTTO 6/45
6 13 18 25 26 40

2 ABB men get death twice over

TWO ALLEGED members of the Alex Boncayao Brigade were each sentenced to die twice by lethal injection by the Quezon City Regional Trial Court for the killing of an 81-year-old Filipino-Chinese business executive and his driver nine years ago.

Ruperto Lopez, 41, of Commonwealth Avenue, Quezon City, and Orlando Bondalian Jr., 39, of Balut, Tondo Manila, were also ordered to pay the heirs of Leonardo Ty, of Union Hicari Fertilizer, a total of P600,000 each for moral and exemplary damages.

Judge Demetrio Macapagal Sr. of the QC RTC Branch 79 also ordered the accused to each pay the heirs of driver Nestor Encarnacio, then 47, of the same amount, apart from P1,620,000 in compensatory damages.

In his 28-page decision, Macapagal found the statement of witness Delea Villanueva, 66, a sidewalk vendor, enough to convict Lopez and Bondalian of two counts of murder.

Records showed that on the morning of Dec. 11, 1995, Villanueva was on a passenger jeepney along Tandang Sora Avenue when three men pulled out guns.

At gunpoint, one of the gunmen ordered the driver of the jeepney to follow the car of Ty and Encarnacio.

Upon reaching Real Street, one of the men signaled to three other men in front of a store and pointed to Ty's car.

At this point, the three men, who included Lopez and Bondallian, drew handguns and fired at the victims' car.

Their cohorts aboard the passenger jeepney also alighted and peppered the car with bullets.

The accused vehemently denied any involvement in the killing. *Tina Santos*

Passengers caught in middle of Caloocan drivers' turf war

By Edson Tandoc Jr.

HUNDREDS of passengers were again stranded in Caloocan City yesterday when a turf war between tricycle and jeepney drivers erupted anew.

Jeepney drivers plying Malabon and Navotas to Recto stopped operating starting early morning after tricycle drivers blocked the jeepneys' route along 2nd Avenue.

Two weeks ago, the jeepney drivers also staged a strike after tricycle drivers on 5th Avenue prevented them from using the road.

Members of the Fifth Avenue West Tricycle Operators and Drivers Association (Fawtoda) had complained that they were losing passengers to jeepneys that passed through 5th Avenue.

Mayor Reynaldo Malonzo resolved the conflict on Feb. 10 by rerouting the jeepneys and making them pass through C3 Road, to De Aquino Street then to 2nd Avenue.

But yesterday, it was the turn of members of the Second Avenue Tricycle Operators and Drivers Association (Satoda) to protest.

Satoda president Franz Duca told the INQUIRER that they were not consulted when Malonzo allowed the jeepneys on 2nd Avenue.

Duca complained that his members were losing passengers and revenue to the jeepneys.

According to him, they used to earn P100 a day. Now, it averaged P50 to P60.

Now, Duca and his members want the jeepney drivers out of 2nd Avenue.

They are proposing that the jeepneys just take Del Mundo Street or go back to their original route on Samson Road.

Or, the jeepneys could just stop loading passengers along 2nd Avenue.

Jeepneys from Malabon and Navotas going to Recto used to take the Monumento Circle. But when the local government tried to ease traffic along the Circle, the jeepneys were rerouted to C3 and 5th Avenue.

The jeepney drivers stopped operations at 7 a.m. yesterday after some tricycle drivers allegedly broke the window of one of the jeepneys which passed through 2nd Avenue and even punched the driver, said jeepney driver Choy Parungao.

When tricycle drivers blocked 2nd Avenue, the jeepney drivers tried passing through 4th Avenue. But tricycle drivers there blocked them. too, Parungao added.

"*Wala na kaming madaanan kaya tumigil na kami* (We couldn't get through so we stopped operating.)," he said.

Satoda members denied hitting any jeepney driver nor setting up blockades.

Malonzo told the INQUIRER that he would no longer change his mind and that the jeepneys should take 2nd Avenue despite the complaints of the tricycle drivers.

Provincial buses to hike fare

NSON-ROA
DIGS DILANGALEN
Mambabatas na Palaban
Walang Iwanan

A DIRTY FUTURE
A child gets his hands dirty as he tears off some candidates' campaign materials illegally posted along Quezon Avenue in Quezon City. JOAN BONDOC

Move illegal—LTFRB

By Tina Santos

CLAIMING independence, the Provincial Bus Operators Association of the Philippines (PBOAP) said it would increase the fare of its air-conditioned units in March by P2 to P5.

Alex Yague, PBOAP president, said that the decision to increase the fare did not need the approval of the Land Transportation Regulatory and Franchising Board (LTFRB) since they were in a deregulated industry.

But in a phone interview, LTFRB Chair Maria Elena Bautista branded the move as illegal.

She explained that although her agency did not dictate the fare for provincial air-con buses, any increase they make could only be 20 percent higher than the fare charged by regular buses.

"Since regular buses have not yet increased fares, (provincial air-con bus) should also remain as is," Bautista said.

She added, "Although we do not dictate how much they should charge the riding public, they would still have to follow a certain percentage as far as increasing their fare is concerned."

Earlier, operators of Metro Manila and provincial bus firms asked the LTFRB to allow them to raise the rate for public transportation by as much as P2 for the first 5 kilometers.

Bautista said three groups of Metro Manila bus operators also sought a fare increase of 37 centavos for each succeeding kilometer, while the provincial group asked for an 18-centavo hike per succeeding kilometer.

The minimum fare on ordinary Metro Manila buses is P4, while the air-conditioned units charge P9.

Jeepney groups from Bulacan have also asked for a P1.50 fare hike, increasing the basic rate from P4 to P5.50.

The petitions were submitted in view of the series of oil price hikes that hit the country.

METROBRIEFS

Suspect nabbed

THE POLICE arrested yesterday in Marikina City one of three suspects who robbed the Premier Bank in Antipolo City last week. Richard Butaslac, 29, of Molave Street, Barangay Parang, Marikina, was attending trial at a Marikina court, where he is facing charges of violating anti-illegal drugs law and illegal possession of explosives, when lawmen collared him. *Luige del Puerto*

Reporter charged

ESTAFA charges were filed yesterday against ABS-CBN new reporter Mylene Acuña for allegedly failing to return P400,000 worth of jewelry to a businesswoman five months ago. Acuña was also charged with violating Batas Pambansa 22 or the Anti-Bouncing Checks Law by Laura Evangelista, of Obando, Bulacan. Evangelista said she entrusted the jewelry to Acuña, who promised to return the valuables within a week. Failing to return the jewelry, Acuña allegedly issued 16 post-dated Banco de Oro checks amounting to P401,625. The checks, however, bounced. Acuña could not be reached for comment. *Tina Santos*

Rookie cop collared

A ROOKIE policeman was arrested with a suspected drug pusher in a buy-bust operation in Makati City the other night for allegedly possessing a gun without a mission order. The lawman was identified as PO1 Reynaldo Miranda, 31, of 7197 McKinley St., Barangay Pio del Pilar, Makati City. *Margaux Ortiz*

Gang leader slain

POLICEMEN killed in a shootout in Quezon City Tuesday night Alex Santos, an alleged leader of the Bahala na Gang, and a resident of Road 23, Project 8, Barangay Bahay Toro. Lawmen were about to arrest Santos for a string of robberies when he allegedly resisted and fired shots at the policemen. He died at the QC General Hospital. *Tina Santos*

Robber gets out on bail, robs again

By Margaux Ortiz

FIVE armed men held up an air-conditioned bus the other night in Makati City and fled with thousands in cash and valuables, including the service firearm of an airport policeman.

PO1 Rody Tallud, of the Makati Theft and Robbery Section, said the robbers, armed with .38 caliber revolvers and a fan knife, announced a holdup inside the AC Transit at 11:45 p.m. while the bus was on the Magallanes flyover.

The suspects then ordered the passengers to hand over their cash, cell phones and jewelry.

During the heist, they found PO3 Willie Pableo, who is assigned at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport.

They threatened to shoot the policeman if he would not surrender his 9-mm Beretta pistol.

When the bus reached the Buendia flyover, the suspects ordered the driver to stop before fleeing.

Tallud said that the complainants, including Pableo, bus driver Eliseo Villarante, and conductor Edgar Bergonia, identified one of the suspects through the police rogue gallery.

Tallud said suspect Benjamin "Wanbol" Santos, 30, of 117 San Juan St., had already been arrested and jailed twice last year for robbery.

The investigator added that Santos, who has been involved in at least four air-con bus robberies in Makati, was even shot in the back and leg by a National Bureau of Investigation agent last September.

But because robbery is bailable, Santos always manages to go scot-free, Tallud said.

The victims told police that a limping Santos led and orchestrated the robbery.

Manila's most wanted falls

THE FOUR-YEAR hunt for one of Manila's 10 most wanted ended in a Makati City hospital last week after the Western Police District learned that he was there, undergoing treatment for a stab wound.

Alfredo Avisado, 39, a former kagawad of Barangay 733, Zone 80 in Manila and a resident of Singalong Street, has been wanted for murder and frustrated murder.

He was arrested at the St. Claire Hospital. *Leila B. Salaverria*

Helper, guard run away with employer's jewels

EIGHT-MILLION pesos in cash and jewelry would have been more than enough capital for a couple to start a life together.

But for housemaid Marissa Montojo and private watchman Manolito Lavaritte, the only life they might share would be that in jail.

Montojo and Lavaritte were arrested Tuesday for allegedly stealing the money and valuables of Shirley Malabanan, a businesswoman of Hemady Star Town Homes, Doña Hemady Street, Quezon City.

Malabanan told the Central Police District Office-Criminal Investigation Unit that she recently went on a month-long vacation abroad and left Montojo to watch over her house.

When she returned home last week, Montojo was gone and so was Lavaritte, who was a guard at their townhouse compound.

A manhunt led police to Montojo's hometown in Hinundayan, Leyte, and Lavaritte's ancestral home in Davao Oriental, where the two were collared.

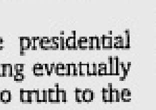
Supt. Procopio Lipana, head of the CPDO-CIU, said they recovered some of Malabanan's jewelry from the two suspects.

Montojo and Lavaritte, who are detained at the CPD-CIU headquarters, are now facing qualified theft charges before the Quezon City Prosecutor's Office. *Tina Santos*

How to deal with an exhibitionist

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo



PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo was ill-advised in attending the alumni homecoming at the Philippine Military Academy (PMA) in Baguio City as an adopted member of Class 1978.

The President is the Armed Forces commander in chief and she should have been at the PMA affair as such. She degraded herself by marching with her adopted "mistahs" (classmates).

Fidel V. Ramos, a West Point graduate, never attended a PMA homecoming when he was President as a member of any class. Mr. Ramos is an adopted member of the PMA class that graduated in the same year he did at West Point.

* * *

The President is also clearly favoring members of her adopted PMA class by appointing them to several important posts within the Philippine National Police and Armed Forces.

Some of them are PNP provincial directors in Laguna and Cavite and commanders of Army brigades. But the plum post being held by a "78er" belongs to that of Col. Delfin Bangit, commander of the Presidential Security Group (PSG).

Many police and military officers are complaining. They say that GMA is playing favorites in favor of her adopted PMA classmates.

Madame President, you are the supreme commander of the PNP and AFP, not just of PMA Class '78.

The perception in the military and police organizations is that by leaning toward members of PMA Class '78, the President is not giving other officers of the same rank the chance to get ahead in the uniformed services. Already there is grumbling among non-PMAers due to the perception that they are excluded from key posts because GMA is biased in favor of all PMA graduates.

* * *

Police Director Lucas Managuelod called me up from Tuguegarao, Cagayan, yesterday and appealed to politicians not to drag his name in the current campaign.

"Please, Mon, tell people in Manila to leave me alone. I'm not taking sides in this political contest because I am a professional officer," Managuelod said.

The two-star police general said he was dumbfounded when he read his name in the banner headline story of the INQUIRER yesterday.

In the story, presidential aspirant Panfilo Lacson said that PNP generals identified with him, including Managuelod, were being sidelined and given minor assignments upon orders of Malacañang.

Lacson specifically pointed to Managuelod as being given a hard time by the administration because of reports that he had been meeting with the senator.

According to the presidential candidate, Malacañang eventually realized there was no truth to the report. Embarrassed, the Palace, Lacson said, tried to recall Managuelod, but the police general supposedly told the President: "Sorry, Ma'am, I don't want to serve under your administration. I'll just wait for the next president."

"Mon, I swear that such a dialogue between me and the President never took place. How could I say those words to my commander in chief?" Managuelod said.

Truth to tell, the police general said, it was during the Macapagal administration that he got his second star.

"*Huwag na sana akong idamay sa away pulitika nila. Nananahimik ako rito* (I hope they leave me out of their political battle. I'm keeping my peace here)," Managuelod, who's vacationing in his home province, said.

* * *

Actor Lito Pimentel tried to kill his wife when she reportedly told him after their sexual intercourse, "Are you done, was that it?"

The greatest insult a woman could hurl at a man is to laugh at his sexual performance or the size of his organ.

A man's worst nightmare is being in a situation where during the sex act, his partner is reading a book and afterwards telling him, "Are you finished, dear?" or "Hurry up, I'm already sleepy."

* * *

Male exhibitionists, those who show their sex organ to women in public, are the most vulnerable to sexual insults.

If you're a woman and an exhibitionist showed himself to you, don't look shocked. Instead, tell the guy that he's got a teeny-weeny penis. His reaction would be to leave with a whimper.

* * *

Why is the Mandaluyong police pussyfooting in investigating the possible involvement of the bus driver and conductor of Corinthian Bus Line with plate PXT 167?

Last January, passengers of the above-named Corinthian bus were held up by three armed men while it was plying the Edsa route.

The victims went to the police station at Edsa crossing in Mandaluyong. But the driver and conductor refused to join them, eliciting suspicion that they could be in cahoots with the robbers.

Parañaque posts record gains as a city

By Atty. Boy Asoy
and Edward Arienda

Paranaque has registered record growth since it became a city in 1998, making it a double celebration for the Paranaquenos as they recently marked their sixth cityhood anniversary in simple rites.

A record revenue collection past the P1 billion mark in the past years has sustained the City's remarkably frenetic pace in infrastructure development that saw the rise of more school buildings, health and daycare centers.

From a large settlement founded by the Spaniards 432 years ago in 1572, Paranaque, largely through the nine-year leadership of Mayor Marquez, evolved into a modern municipality and was finally elevated into a city on Feb. 13, 1998.

Signed by former President Fidel V. Ramos and ratified by the people in a plebiscite called for the purpose, Republic Act No. 8507 stamped the cityhood imprimatur on Paranaque, whose transformation from an agricultural landscape dominated by salt beds into the fastest growing metropolis south of Manila is a favorite topic of discourse even now among political observers.

To commemorate the historic occasion, the City Council of Paranaque approved an ordinance declaring Feb. 13 of every year henceforth as Foundation Day of the City.

Philhealth cards, jobs distributed

In place of the hokum and pokum marking past commemorations of the occasion, Thursday's celebration saw Mayor Marquez preside over the distribution of Philhealth cards to 1,676 residents of depressed areas in the city and, through a 'Mega Jobs' Fair', jobs to students looking for employment opportunities so they can continue their studies.

At the initiative of Mayor Marquez, the Sangguniang Panlunsod passed a resolution appropriating P1 million to pay for the health insurance premiums. Under the Philhealth program adopted by the mayor, Philhealth's NCR Office commits itself to share in the payment of the insurance premiums with an equivalent P1 million.

A Philhealth card, according to Mayor Marquez, entitles the holder and the rest of his immediate family to free medical services, including hospitalization and operation, in any Philhealth-acrredited hospitals and clinics in Metro Manila. A cardholder doesn't have to shell out cash as down payment to be accommodated in any of these accredited clinics and hospitals. Outpatients with Philhealth cards undergoing chemotherapy, hemodialysis, radio theraphy and cataract extinction will be reimbursed as well for their expenses.

Annual income

In his report to the people on the occasion of Paranaque's sixth year as a chartered city, Mayor Marquez said Paranaque's estimated annual income this year could reach P1.4 billion from the P1.8 estimate in 2003. The city's certified statements of income showed annual revenue collection of P1.15 billion in 2001 and P1.05 billion in 2002.

Rather than interpreting it as a reflection of a chink in the city's tax collection armor, the decline in income, both estimated and actual, should speak well of the Marquez administration's aggressive tax campaign which includes lowering of tax rates on selected taxable items to enable taxpayers to go out and pay up. Today, the city lays claim to the distinction of having the lowest tax rates among all local government units in the country.

An innovative tax scheme initiated by Marquez saw the City Treasury officials putting up the properties of big-name tax delinquents for public bidding. Some firms hauled the City Government to court but were soundly rebuffed and had to pay up. As a result, the City Treasury logged record tax collections in a single day in 2003, thus greatly boosting the city revenues for the year.

During such auctions, the City Government bought portions of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport, another tax delinquent, and 240 ha of prime PEA property in the coastal area.

Flagship programs

In this, the final year of Mayor Marquez's term as Paranaque City's Chief Executive, the celebrity mayor is working double time to leave a lasting legacy to the poorest (the urban poor) and the special children (the differently-abled) in his constituency.

Free college education

As a testament to Marquez's stubborn will to make education available to city residents from all walks of life, Paranaque City College of Science & Technology (PCCST) stands in barangay San Dionsio accepting students too poor to be able to go through college and transforming them into graduates of livelihood courses for gainful employment. Not only does PCCST equip these indigent but deserving students with useful skills; it actually finds them jobs after graduation among the network of commercial establishments, factories and plants within the city.

At any given year under Mayor Marquez's administration, the City Government of Paranaque pays the tuition fees of about 300 indigent but deserving college scholars enrolled in the school of their choice and taking up courses of their interest.

The figures do not include the number of students enrolled in PCCST who do not pay a single centavo there and are thus may be called City Government scholars as well.

Land for the urban poor

The plight of the urban poor, those who struggle through life in the so-called depressed areas, also gets Mayor Marquez's undivided attention. It is for them that he created the Urban Mission Area Development Office (UMADO) which works under the City Department of Social Welfare and Development.

UMADO deals with the problems confronting the poor dwellers in the City. These are problems arising from eviction or demolition of their community as well as from disasters, manmade or not, like fires or floods. Where relocation is not possible, the City Government of Paranaque, through UMADO and in regular consultations with Mayor Marquez, buys the land from which the poor long occupying it are to be evicted.

Already, the City Government has bought almost three hectares of such lands and has distributed or about to distribute land titles to some 27,000 squatter-families in barangays San Antonio, BF, Sto. Nino and San Isidro.

These titles do not come for free. The beneficiaries are paying or will have to pay for the land on terms dictated by their earning capacity.

Mayor Marquez's program for the urban poor includes complete electrification of all depressed areas in the city.

Meanwhile, UMADO is still negotiating for the purchase of more lands for the urban poor whose ultimate dream in life is to locate themselves on a corner of the city and to be able to build their homes, no matter how decrepit, on lands they legally own.

Special attention for special kids

One sector that has also been generously benefiting from Mayor Marquez's administration is the special group of differently-abled kids. Throughout his nine-year term, the celebrity mayor will not be caught turning down any request from them.

A foundation which he set up - the Alay para Kinabukasan ng Kapwa Pilipino Foundation, Inc. or ASK - provides free corrective surgery to children of Paranaque with cleft lip or cleft palate. Top surgeons from Australia, Europe and the US, founders and supporters of Operation Restore Hope, fly to the city every year and pay for their own air fares to do the mission. In three years, ASK and Operation Restore Hope has operated on nearly 200 children with facial deformities, filling their hearts with hope and bringing back the smile on their faces.

Peace and order

With an undermanned police force under Mayor Marquez's command, it is a source of wonder to many how Paranaque keeps its people safe from lawlessness and the investors and businessmen happy.

The operative words here, according to Mayor Marquez, are mobility and visibility.

To date, the City Government has already purchased for police use almost 250 patrol cars, motorcycles, multicabs and ambulances, thus helping them to become more mobile and visible in their areas of responsibility. Translated, this means that each of the city's 16 barangays has at its service about 10.8 of such vehicles.

Marquez said that with the police problems regarding mobility done away with, there is no reason why they cannot respond to reports of crimes and distress calls faster and more effectively. As well, the fleet of vehicles available at their disposal makes the Paranaque police more visible and effective deterrents to commission of more crimes.

As a result of the peace and order obtaining in the city, more investors and businessmen are locating their businesses in Paranaque. At the last count, the popular SM chain of stores is operating two branches in the city, one in barangay San Dionisio along Dr. delos Santos ave. and another in barangay Don Bosco in Bicutan.

The list of more recent investors who have poured millions of pesos of capital in the city includes Ayala Corp., Price Mart, Robinson's and Amvel Real Estate. Another good news for Paranaquenos is the transfer of Nayong Pilipino from Pasay to prime reclaimed lands in the city, the same place where Pagcor has also committed itself to construction a 140-hectare, Las Vegas-styled amusement park.

Other programs

While the City Government of Paranaque is pouring more resources and attention on its abovementioned flagship programs, it also distinguishes itself of doing no less on other fronts.

It boasts itself of a social welfare office on call 24 hours daily, responding to emergency disaster calls promptly and efficiently. When fires, floods or typhoons wreak destruction on any barangay or the whole city, the social welfare team rushes to the affected areas without delay and already carrying relief assistance to the victims. In most cases, the mayor himself presides over the distribution of the relief goods. Assistance to fire victims, in most cases, include distribution of wood and galvanized iron to help them start the construction of what is to become their new homes.

To help effect quick delivery of health services to his constituents, Marquez's administration has acquired a mobile hospital in support of the city-funded Paranaque Community Hospital in San Dionisio. In 2003 alone, it purchased a mobile health service for barangay Tambo and one more ambulance for barangay Vitalez.

As part of the city health program, each barangay receives its share of free medicines and medical and dental equipment and other supplies from the city government. Any given time at each health center in the city, a doctor and a nurse are available. To update them on the latest in health care, city health aides and officers attend regular training courses whether held inside or outside Paranaque.

Adding more teeth to the city's solid waste management program was the acquisition last year of two units of wheel loader and another two units of roller. Also purchased last year were three units of minidump trucks for barangays San Isidro, Baclaran and Sto. Nino.

Likewise, the city government bought for barangay San Antonio a small-scale machine converting segregated wastes into fertilizers.

As before, construction of infrastructures in the city continues at a frenetic pace. Newly built are the senior citizens' recreation center in Don Bosco and a 1-hectare Eco Park in Marcelo Green. By now, almost all roads here have been either concreted or asphalted, canals lined and esteros dredged, and internal pathways lighted.

Highly noticeable during the term of Mayor Marquez is the construction of more school buildings, over 30 built since his first term. Mushrooming, too, in the city are multi-covered, all-purpose gyms, impressive day care centers, and open basketball courts even in crammed neighborhoods in all barangays.

This year alone, the City Government has allocated P400 million for the construction of a school building (high school and elementary) Sun Valley in barangay San Antonio and another P30 million for the construction of an elementary school in barangay Moonwalk.

The proliferation of basketball courts in every nook and cranny of the city tells much of the story of its chief executive, a working student who rose from the ranks to become first a professional basketball cager, a movie and television actor still much sought after today, and, later, as vice mayor and then three-term mayor of Paranaque City who has never suffered a single defeat at the polls in his colorful political career.

Into his job as a public servant, Mayor Marquez has carried with him the value of honest and hard work known by a boy who, at a tender age, learned to do man-size jobs to survive with nothing but big dreams to inspire him; the Spartan-like discipline of a consummate athlete; and the creativity and sensitivity of a film and TV actor to make Paranaque what it is today - a local government unit as multi-awarded as the man himself.

GRADERS warmly receive Mayor Joey Marquez in a school function. Under his nine-year leadership, the City Government of Parañaque has built over 30 schools.

PHOTOS BY ART SANTIAGO

MAYOR Marquez signs a memorandum of agreement with Philhealth executives (top photo) prior to distributing health insurance cards (lower photo) as part of his health program for the poor during Parañaque's cityhood anniversary celebration Thursday at the Parañaque City gym in barangay San Isidro.

President Macapagal-Arroyo greets Parañaqueños on sixth city anniversary

PRESIDENT Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo congratulated Mayor Joey P. Marquez and his constituents on the occasion of Paranaque's sixth cityhood anniversary celebration recently.

The President, in a message, told Paranaquenos that the "opportunities they face should encourage and inspire them to continuously improve the quality of their lives and aim for prosperity that will contribute to the nation's development."

The President likewise enjoined them to continue their active participation in nation building and not lose sight of the momentum that the country has gained in the past years.

"In all your undertaking, I wish you all the best. Let us strengthen our sense of patriotism and faith in the Filipino, take pride in our rich culture and heritage, and continue our active participation in bringing the Philippines to its rightful place in the family of nations... progressive, proud and free!

Unique computerized alarm system up

By Ailyn H. Romea

A STATE-of-the-art computerized alarm system will soon be installed at the Paranaque City police headquarters and all its outposts to enable law enforcers to check crimes and respond to distress calls in five minutes or quicker.

Mayor Joey Marquez described the alarm system, designed by a Filipino, as "unique and the first of its kind in the country."

The system allows a person to report an ongoing crime or any emergency situation via text messaging using a cell phone. In less than five seconds, the message in prearranged codes will register in the principal computer software installed at the main police headquarters or the mayor's office and acknowledge receipt of the message.

At the same time, the message will be thrown back to a network of software set up at the offices of all participating agencies and NGOs, detailing the address of the caller and the exact emergency assistance he needs.

To engage the services of the alarm system, a user has to register his cell phone, thus allowing the computer to quickly establish his address and the kind of assistance he requires utilizing text codes such as R for robbery or F for fire.

The user pays nothing for the use of the alarm system. It comes as part of the peace and order program of the City Government of Paranaque.

Text messages coming from an unregistered cell are automatically written off as invalid. Or the system will respond to a distress call from a registered cell, with the action team finding out in the end that no such emergency situation exists.

In that case, the caller who made the prank message will be made to pay the cost incurred by the action team responding to his call.

The system's software, according to Marquez, can accommodate a thousand messages simultaneously.

Marquez and his staff are currently doing the rounds of the city's 16 barangays demonstrating the alarm system that will be in place next month at the earliest.

"Public response during the demonstration has been terrific," Marquez noted. "The most enthusiastic response is coming from the homeowners' groups. They want the system to be in place right away."

The system, according to Marquez, "can be used not only to strengthen the capabilities of the police in their fight against crimes but also in the city's information dissemination campaign in the form of health, traffic and emergency advisories."

Happy 6th
Cityhood
Anniversary
to Parañaque !

TO MAINTAIN peace and order in the City, Mayor Marquez gave away multi-cabs to each police station and barangay in Parañaque SAN MARTIN DE PORRES BARANGAY CAPTAIN THELMA SINGSON SHAKES HANDS WITH THE MAYOR AFTER RECEIVING HER UNIT.

Livelihood program won awards for Parañaque & Marquez

By Atty. Boy Asoy

WHILE THE City's vigorous livelihood program is generating jobs and employment opportunities left and right, it is also picking up awards here and there for the exceptionally effective implementation of such a program.

Crowning this slew of awards was the selection of Paranaque City as the top Kabalikat Awardee for 2003 on the national level.

It was the Technical Education Skills Development Authority (TESDA) that had evaluated all the technical and vocational skills training offered by local government units both in the whole of Manila and in the entire country, according to Mrs. Lina Hilario, concurrent officer-in-charge of the Paranaque Livelihood and Resource Management Office and manager of the Paranaque Employment Service Office.

Paranaque scored a double victory on the regional level. To the City's selection as Metro Manila's Kabalikat Awardee for 2003, Mayor Joey Marquez added his own award from TESDA-NCR "in recognition of his dynamic leadership and invaluable support for the technical education and skills development program in Paranaque City."

Other honors won by the City in the area of livelihood included an Outstanding Training Achievement Award from the People's Livelihood and Resource Management Office, a Cooperative Award for its active cooperative program, and the Gawad Kalinga Award conferred by the Couples for Christ movement.

Mrs. Hilario said Couples for Christ honored Paranaque for sharing its vision to alleviate poverty and help rebuild the nation by restoring the dignity of the poor and providing them 'with opportunities for a better quality of life.

How lively and effective is the City's livelihood program?

In 2003, it generated over 100,000 jobs for City residents. A total of 41,414 became wage earners while 60,000 more, propped up by the City Government's P28 million capital assistance, started their own businesses. A special program for the employment of students found 168 jobs for members from this sector.

The City's partnership project with the Department of Labor & Employment and the Kasama Ka Kabataan (KKK) to clean the esteros employed 33 workers with DOLE taking care of their salaries.

Mayor Marquez said the City's award-winning livelihood development program has been adopted by the Couples for Christ in Metro Manila as well as by Rotary International District 3830 covering the areas of Makati, Muntinlupa, Paranaque, Las Pinas, Taguig and Pateros.

"We look forward to presenting our program to the other cities and provinces for adoption and implementation," said Marquez. "This has been a source of pride for Paranaque. Duplication of our program by other LGUs illustrates the effectivity of our very own."

Completing the City's free skills training program is helping the trainees find jobs. Where none is available, according to Mayor Marquez, they are given loans under a micro-financing scheme to start their own businesses.

Last year, the City's skills development program turned out 100 graduates in dressmaking, 42 in building wiring, 119 in cosmetology, 72 in food trades, 61 in welding and 38 in high-speed for a total of 2,071 graduates.

SPORTS
E-mail: pr_sports@inquirer.com.ph
Editor:
Teddyvic S. Melendres
Assistant Editor:
Edwin M. Villanueva

POC recognizes Literal-led BAP

Affiliation with Fiba is key–Dayrit

By June Navarro

DAYRIT

THE OFFICIAL recognition of the Philippine Olympic Committee stays with the Basketball Association of the Philippines.

With this declaration, POC president Celso Dayrit yesterday emphatically upheld the BAP headed by Tiny Literal as the national sports association for basketball over the court-recognized, SEC-approved Basketball Amateur of the Philippines Inc. led by Nic Jorge.

Dayrit said the key to the recognition of BAP as the legitimate member of the POC family was its affiliation with the world amateur basketball body or Fiba.

"Such recognition (by the POC) is granted to the NSA which is recognized by the international body of the sport," said Dayrit.

The final POC ruling on the basketball issue came after the Philippine Sports Commission declared the other day it would support only the association that the local Olympic body recognizes.

PSC chair Eric Buhain said that while the courts can stop the agency from supporting the BAP, it can only give funding to a group recognized by the POC.

Meanwhile, former imports Derrick Rucker and Kevin Freeman may just stage a comeback in the Philippine Basketball Association this season.

This surfaced yesterday after league officials officially invited the Brisbane Bullets of Australia to see action in the quarterfinals of the PBA Fiesta Conference.

Rucker, who played for the Barangay Ginebra Kings, and Freeman, Tanduay's reinforcement before selling its franchise to FedEx, are currently playing for the Bullets in Australia's National Basketball League.

Freeman, however, is nursing a knee injury and has been sidelined during the Bullets' recent games.

The Bullets are ranked fourth in the NBL, a notch above the Melbourne Tigers, who also expressed interest in the Fiesta Conference set to begin on Feb. 22.

Other teams being eyed to join Lebanon as the foreign challenge in the Fiesta tournament are Argentina's Club Obras, Simon Fraser University of Canada and the national squads of Brazil and Venezuela.

49th gold elates GMA

THE GOLD came late but it was highly appreciated just as the other 48 medals that the Philippines captured in the last Southeast Asian Games.

"This is for our swimmers who trained so hard to deliver and most especially, this is for the country," said Philippine Sports Commission chair Eric Buhain yesterday.

The Vietnam SEAG organizing committee had earlier informed the Philippine Olympic Committee that it had awarded the country a 49th gold medal by upholding the victory of the RP quartet of Miguel Molina, Miguel Mendoza, Mark Kalaw and Carlo Piccio in the men's 200-meter relay.

Buhain said President Macapagal-Arroyo expressed elation and congratulated the four

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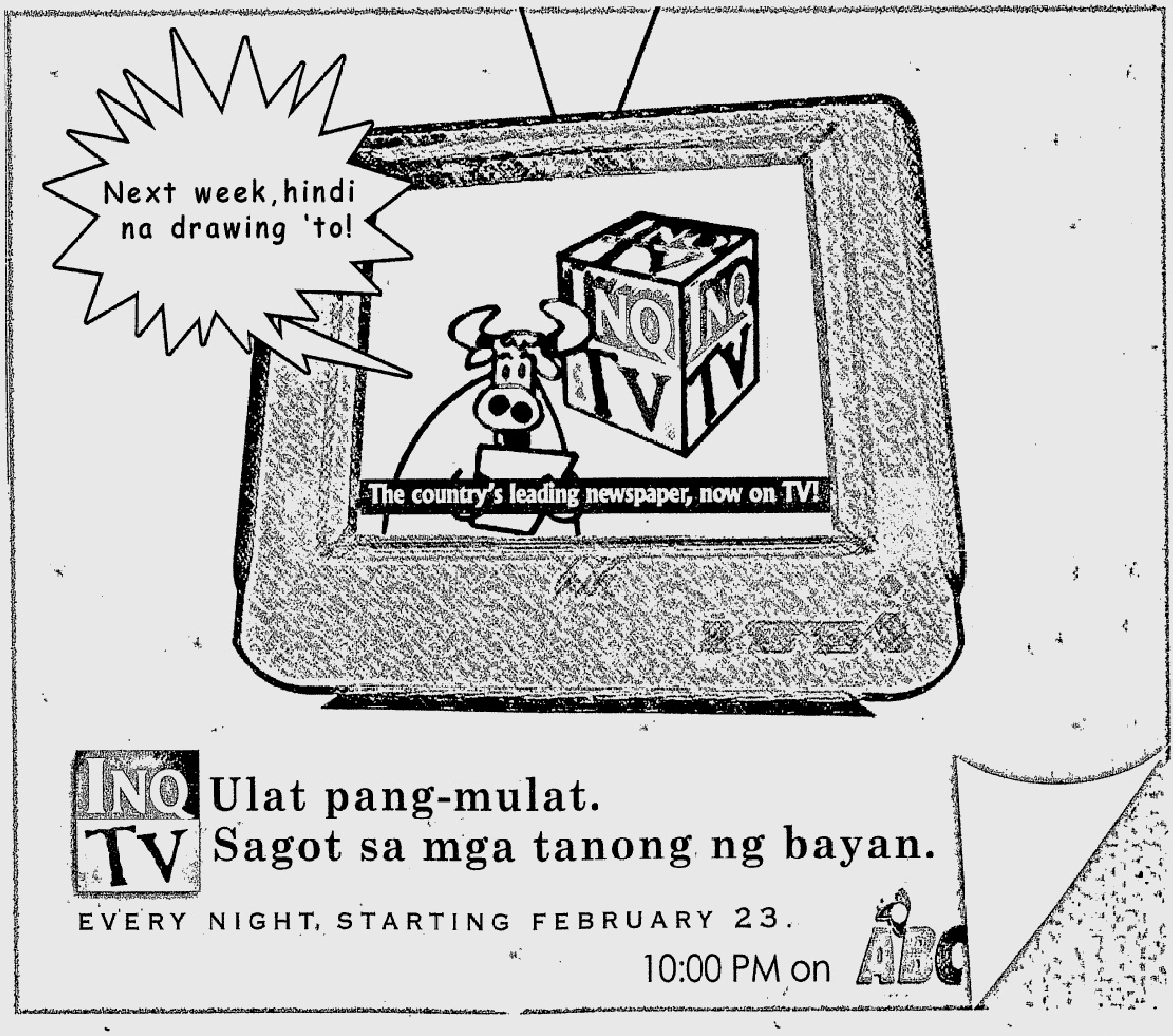

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NATIONAL STUDENTS

PMI, UPH-R in finals

By Trina Ibarle

PHILIPPINE Maritime Institute defused University of Manila's final rally to prevail, 91-85, and arrange a title duel with University of Perpetual Help-Rizal in the Metro Manila eliminations of the National Students Basketball Championships at the Rizal Memorial Coliseum yesterday.

More important, PMI and UPH-R advanced to the national inter-collegiate slated in Lucena City from March 1-7.

The UPH-R Altas trampled the NCAA titlist Letran Knights, 71-64, earlier with Vladimir Jon and Nonoy Javier scoring 19 points apiece for the Las Piñas-based quintet. Playmaker Khiel Misa added 17 points for UPH-R, which made the national finals for the first time.

UM and Letran will dispute the third and last slot allotted for Metro Manila tomorrow.

Two free throws by Cris Sta. Maria and a split by Nilo Catimbang dashed the Hawks' chances in the last 16 seconds, allowing PMI to ward off UM's late 85-88 threat and earn the right to meet the Altas in the final game Friday.

Niño Marquez paced the Maritimers with 25 points, most of which he scored in the second quarter as PMI posted a 58-44 halftime spread. Sta. Maria, who came from Mapua High School, contributed 22 points for PMI.

As the Maritimers enjoyed an imposing 79-57 lead in the third quarter, the Hawks stoked an 18-3 run in the fourth quarter behind the efforts of veteran Louise Aquino and Ronnie Matias.

Aquino fired back-to-back triples from both corners of the arc, while follow-up shots and backdoor plays by Matias allowed the Hawks to close in, 80-84, in the last 1:36 minutes.

In women's play, Adamson edged De La Salle University, 77-73, to book a trip to Lucena City with University of Santo Tomas, which won by default over Ateneo.

La Salle-Greenhills routed La Salle-Zobel, 63-48, and PCCr downed PCU, 67-58, in high school action. LS-Greenhills and PCCr also advanced to the national students championships.

ERNIE U. SARMIENTO

UPH-R's Khiel Misa (4) gets blocked by Letran's Jonathan Aldave.

Adamson tops UAAP softball

ADAMSON survived a scare, nipping Santo Tomas, 7-6, yesterday to capture its fifth University Athletic Association of the Philippines (UAAP) women's softball crown at the UST field.

The Lady Tigers, trailing 7-5 in the bottom of the seventh and last inning, got the potential tying runs on base with two outs, but their rally fell short.

Emily Tayag drove in Joan Locsin from second with a grounder through third to make it 7-6 but Gedda Valencia, who was intentionally walked earlier, was caught in a rundown between third and second for the game's final out.

The win allowed the Lady Falcons to sweep the best-of-three title series, having won the opener, 3-0 last Saturday.

"It was a tight game. UST gave us quite a scare, especially in the final inning. But everyone in the team contributed her share," said Adamson assistant coach Jenny de Jesus.

Adamson opened the game with a four-run explosion but UST scored four times too in a swift comeback highlighted by pitcher Valencia's three-run blast in the lower half of the first inning.

The Lady Falcons broke the 4-4 tie in the next inning and added two more runs in the fifth before the Lady Tigers added a solo run in the lower fifth for that 7-5 Adamson lead.

Adamson finished with 10 hits off Valencia while fielding four pitchers, who combined to limit UST to eight safeties.

Alleny Figueroa was the winning pitcher with Loverly Parohinog emerging the Most Valuable Player for the Lady Falcons, who ruled this event from 1998 to 2001. *Trina Ibarle*

Tryouts resume

ILOILO City—There were no giants in sight, but a handful among the 150 participants in yesterday's kick-off leg of the Visayas swing of the RP-Cebuana Lhuillier "Tryouts ng Bayan" showed potential at the Iloilo Sports Complex covered gym.

Earning the attention of national coaches Dong Vergeire and Boyzie Zamar were 6-foot-3 Paul Rosal of University of Iloilo, 6-2 Raffy Ynion of Sun Yat Sen, 5-11 Huilliard Seth Yap (ICCHS), 5-10 Elben Leonida (University of San Agustin), 5-10 Kristoffer Ariola (Western Institute of Technology) and 5-10 Samson King Jr. (Sta. Maria Catholic College).

The tryouts being held in coordination with the Basketball Association of the Philippines was facilitated by the Iloilo Basketball League headed by Robert Uy.

Meanwhile, Philippine basketball team manager Jean Henri Lhuillier yesterday expressed disappointment that Cebuana Lhuillier's support of the men's national basketball team program has been put into question.

Times have changed, says Torre

TIMES have changed…

This is Grandmaster Eugene Torre's reply to the criticism of fellow GMs Joey Antonio and Bong Villamayor on his "inconsistent stand" regarding the proposal to give GMs automatic berths to the country's squad in the Chess Olympiad.

"Times have changed with the emergence of young brilliant players like IMs Mark Paragua, Ronald Dableo, NMs John Paul Gomez and Oliver Barbosa, among others," said Torre, Asia's first GM and 17 times RP board one player in the Chess Olympiad, in a press statement.

"Should we, the three GMs, insist that we will be seeded outright to the national team, a great injustice will be inflicted on Mark, the most bemedalled athlete of the Vietnam SEA Games, the highest FIDE-rated Filipino player and a world championship candidate."

Meanwhile, chair Eric Buhain said the Philippine Sports Commission gave allowances to the RP players that took part in the World Youth Chess Championships in Greece last November.

Buhain confirmed this during the PSA Sports Forum on Tuesday.

"The PSC gave P437,400 to the National Chess Federation of the Philippines as allowances of the team, equivalent to $450 each to the 11 athletes and 7 officials who went to Greece," Buhain said.

Misguided moves by military misfits

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

I CAN'T understand Grandmasters Joey Antonio and Bong Villamayor.

First, they accused Sammy Estimo of pocketing chess money. Second, they accused Eugene Torre of being an Estimo ally while also branding Eugene Torre as "inconsistent."

What would they do next, accuse Toti Abundo of being a Russian spy?

Estimo is big fish in chess as he is the secretary general of the National Chess Federation of the Philippines. Torre is the bigger fish as, besides being a world chess somebody for nearly three decades now, he is also former NCFP president. By their stature alone, you don't just badmouth them. In public yet. That's utter disrespect for authority.

Who do Joey and Bong think they are? Ping Lacson?

Ping Lacson, the senator from Cavite, can go charge anyone with crimes that even Nardong Putik can possibly think of and he can always go scot-free. Immunity, they call it.

But Joey and Bong?

They are not even *kagawads* and here they are, masquerading as the most righteous men in Philippine chess today. They may yet end up pleading their case in Plaza Miranda where nincompoops eagerly await their coming—that is, if Mayor Atienza would allow them.

The funny thing is, Joey and Bong had been hurling mud using some newspapers that are—very funny, too—only too willing to accommodate nothing but a pile of garbage being bandied about as genuine issues.

You have gripes, go tell your national sports association officers about them.

You go to newspapers and you are worse than a beggar begging for alms from a fellow beggar.

The thing is, it seems the gripes of Joey and Bong aren't valid at all. Otherwise, a probe by the NCFP would have been in progress by now. At most, I heard that an oust-Estimo move has fizzled out faster than when it took flight.

So, what gives?

After their initial salvo on Sammy Estimo fell by the wayside, Joey and Bong next tried to pin Eugene Torre down with the silliest of accusations: That Eugene is not consistent with his stand on how to form a team for the Chess Olympics.

My golly, since when was Eugene Torre inconsistent?

If there's one chess icon the continent of Asia has consistently revered the last 30 years since his breakthrough win in the 1974 Nice Olympiad, it is Eugene Torre.

If Florencio Campomanes is a walking chess monument, Eugene Torre is a towering chess landmark.

While Campomanes, the first Asian Fide president, roams the globe now as a chess ambassador of goodwill, Torre, the first Asian grandmaster, stands out to this day as Asia's living legend in chess. No one can take that away from Eugene Torre.

Not Joey Antonio.

Not Bong Villamayor.

Not even Nardong Putik if he were alive today.

Torre's integrity is beyond question and anybody trying to besmirch his reputation is doomed, if not consigned to purgatory.

How many have failed trying to crush Jaworski's myth of longevity in basketball?

You just can't uncrown a king with wild accusations.

And what's wrong with Eugene waiving his right to an automatic slot to the Olympic Chess Team?

I can't find a nobler move than that.

By giving up his slot, Eugene merely wanted to give the young players all the elbow room to gun for precious seats to the National Team. If that's not a most unselfish, patriotic act in its most concrete form, what is?

Or are Joey and Bong afraid of giving up their own berths for fear of finding themselves getting overpowered by our clutch of young chess players today aching to make it to the Spain Olympiad in October through a qualifying tournament?

C'mon, Joey and Bong, let's stop this foolishness. Go back to the chessboard because that's where you are supposed to have been sworn to inhabit before flag and country as soldiers of the republic. The military did not enlist you to make noise; it got you aboard to make the military proud of developing good citizens through chess. Stop destroying that military badge of sportsmanship and gentlemanly mien or you might end up being accused as remnants of the Oakwood mutiny. You don't want a dishonorable discharge, do you?

My advice?

Leave the intramurals to your officers. Better yet, heed the call of Mat Defensor, your level-headed NCFP president: "Stop using the media to air your gripes. Present your case, if ever there is one, to the board for resolution."

If you can't follow simple instructions, sorry, you have no business being both military men and members of the national chess pool.

Time to resign.

***

FASTBREAK. I failed to attend the wedding of Norman Tugot and Claire Monasterio on Valentine's Day (Feb. 14) and I owe the lovebirds an apology. The wedding's major sponsors were, among others, former President Fidel V. Ramos, incumbent Davao City Mayor Rudy Duterte and Bobby Huang. Norman, a golf buddy of mine for nearly two decades now, had called me up several times to remind me about it. What takes the cake is, Tino Tugot, the six-time Philippine Open Golf champion, had wanted me to come. "Tatay (Ka Tino) said he'd fly from Bukidnon only to see you attend my wedding," said Norman. "He didn't see you during the last PSA Awards and that broke his heart somewhat." I arrived late for the PSA Awards but that's no excuse. I had a previous commitment the day Norman and Claire tied the knot but that is no excuse, either. My apologies, Norman. My apologies, Ka Tino. Ka Tino, almost 87 now, has been a friend for 30 years or so. Promise, will make it up to you soon, dear buddies.

SPORTSWATCH

Gorres, Mangubat weigh-in today

PHILIPPINE No. 1 flyweight Z "The Dream" Gorres and ex-WBC international flyweight ruler Randy Mangubat take to the scales today for the official weigh-in of their 10-round showdown tomorrow at the Makati Coliseum. Games and Amusements Board boxing division chief Emmanuel Flores will supervise today's weigh-in. The southpaw Gorres, who holds a 15-win, 1-loss record with 9 KO's, will stake his reputation against the battle-hardened Mangubat, the 61-fight veteran from Davao Del Norte. Gorres-Mangubat will headline Friday's card, which will be supported by the Ernesto Rubillar-Elmer Muyco duel. Also lined up is the Larry Mede-Jun Eraham tiff. ***Salven Lagumbay, Contributor***

George Foreman returning for $20M

MIAMI—George Foreman agreed to a tentative $20-million deal to return for a fight celebrating the 30th anniversary of his epic bout with Muhammad Ali, promoter Don King said Tuesday. King said he talked with the 55-year-old Foreman last week about the prospects of a fight. "We've got a verbal deal," King said. "He said, 'I'm willing to fight one more time.'" Foreman has said he's interested in fighting again to show young people that there's no reason to fear getting older. He hasn't fought since 1997, when he lost his heavyweight title to Shannon Briggs. He has spent his time since as a TV pitchman and boxing commentator. Foreman first won the heavyweight title in 1973 by knocking out Joe Frazier. He lost the title the next year to Ali in a bout fought in Zaire known as the "Rumble in Jungle." ***AP***

Xavier charity bowling rolls off

BOWLING for a cause takes center stage as the 1st Xavier School Charity Bowl unfurls at 5 p.m. today at the E-Lanes Bowling Center along Ortigas Avenue. This tournament, spearheaded by the Xavier High School Varsity Bowling Team and the Xavier High School Faculty and Maintenance Personnel Association (FACAMPA), will feature three-person teams including at least one Xavier student and two teachers or guests. The tournament is for the benefit of the Xavier School Educational Trust Fund, which provides financial assistance to Xavier scholars. Xavier Bowling Team coach Aimee Apolinario and skipper Brian Chong are optimistic of the tournament's success. Major sponsors are Citibank, Honda Pangasinan and Prudential Guarantee.

Sports medicine seminar March 1-3

THE 2004 Philippine Sports Medicine Seminar of the International Olympic Committee Medical Commission will be held March 1-3 at the Westin Philippine Plaza. Specialists from the IOC Medical Commission, Fiba Medical Committee and the World Anti-Doping Agency (Wada) will be the resource speakers, according to Dr. Jose Raul Canlas, head of the Philippine Center for Sports Medicine. Among the topics to be discussed are expanding world of sports medicine, doping, drug testing an ergogenic aids, sudden cardiac death in sports, treatment of low back pains and different musculoskeletal injuries, preventive medicine in sports, common medical ailment in sports, physiotherapy of common sports injuries, shoewear and athletics. Participants will be limited. Interested parties may contact Elen Constantino at 521-9123 and 522-2374.

Falcons pace Puyat cage tourney

ADAMSON University continued its giant-killing run in the Red Bull-sponsored Lito Puyat Cup basketball tournament recently by beating four-time UAAP champion La Salle, 75-69, at the FEU gym. Kenneth Bono, Pat Cabahug and Ato Canuday knocked in 18, 16 and 14 points, respectively, as the Falcons led from start to finish en route to their pacesetting 6-0 card in Group I of the 16-team tourney organized by Micaba's Cenon "Pipay' Buenaventura. Reigning UAAP titlist Far Eastern University capped its elimination assignments with a 71-68 victory over University of Perpetual Help-Rizal to remain half-a-game behind Adamson. In other games, the Falcons nipped the Ateneo Blue Eagles on Canuday's buzzer-beating basket and the UP Maroons trimmed the Mapua Cardinals, 67-62. Elimination action continues on Saturday at the FEU gym. The games pit UP against UST at 9:30 a.m., PCU (B) against San Beda at 11, SBC against Ateneo at 1 p.m., Ateneo against UPH-R at 2:30 and San Sebastian against Adamson at 4 p.m.

Roligon cockpit slates 2 big derbies

COCKERS and breeders aiming for a jackpot prize with minimal investment may join two derbies slated at Roligon Mega Cockpit. To be hosted anew by Roligon owner Rolly Ligon, the first event is dubbed "Walang Iwanan 4-Cock Derby" on Feb. 28. It dangles a guaranteed prize of P440,000 for an entry fee of P5,500. A bonus prize of P20,000 awaits the fastest kill champion. Set on March 4, 6 and 9 is the "Largahan 5-Cock Derby" with a guaranteed prize of P1.5 million and entry fee of P8,800. The champion handler and gaffer gets P100,000 and P50,000, respectively. A whopping prize of P250,000 awaits the fastest kill champion. His handler and gaffer will receive P35,000 and P15,000, respectively. Reservation of cockhouses is open and interested parties may call 833-2275, 833-1638, 852-9812 and 852-9774 (look for Hazel or Shirley).

RP Open registration ends today

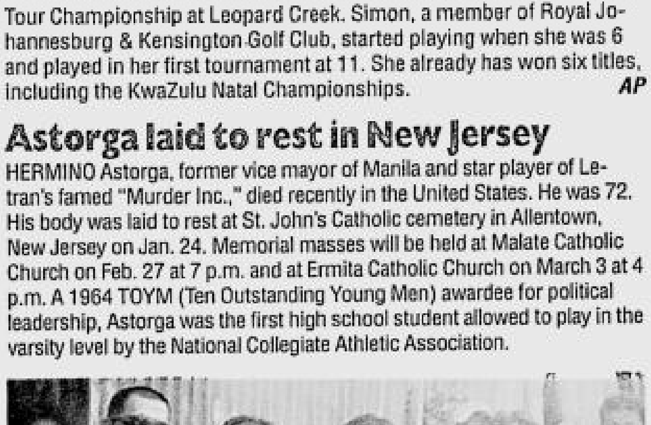
REGISTRATION deadline for the one-day qualifying tournament for next week's DHL-Philippine Open golf championship ends at 12 noon today, according to the organizing National Golf Association of the Philippines. Registration fee is pegged at P5,000. Interested players may register at the NGAP office (524-5160) or at The Riviera (8889127 or 046-4142836). The 18-hole special qualifier, which stakes 10 RP Open berths, is open to pros and amateurs (handicap 0-4) of all nationalities. Meanwhile, the NGAP also announced the listup for exempt players will end on Saturday.

Another teener teeing up vs men

MALELANE, South Africa—Another 14-year-old girl will be teeing it up against the men, this time in South Africa. Ashleigh Simon, the top female amateur in South Africa, has been invited to play this week in the Tour Championship at Leopard Creek. Simon, a member of Royal Johannesburg & Kensington Golf Club, started playing when she was 6 and played in her first tournament at 11. She already has won six titles, including the KwaZulu Natal Championships. ***AP***

Astorga laid to rest in New Jersey

HERMINO Astorga, former vice mayor of Manila and star player of Letran's famed "Murder Inc.," died recently in the United States. He was 72. His body was laid to rest at St. John's Catholic cemetery in Allentown, New Jersey on Jan. 24. Memorial masses will be held at Malate Catholic Church on Feb. 27 at 7 p.m. and at Ermita Catholic Church on March 3 at 4 p.m. A 1964 TOYM (Ten Outstanding Young Men) awardee for political leadership, Astorga was the first high school student allowed to play in the varsity level by the National Collegiate Athletic Association.



CYCLING CHAMP. Members of the Horacio dela Costa Homes II cycling team are shown after ruling the recent Inter-Barangay Cycling Championship in Lagro, Quezon City. The winning squad was headed by Norberto Flores (extreme right).

Pacquiao flies to US for Marquez bout

By Salven L. Lagumbay, *Contributor*

MANNY Pacquiao, the acknowledged universal featherweight king, will leave for the United States tomorrow to finalize his scheduled May 22 dream showdown with reigning WBA/IBF featherweight king Juan Manuel "Dinamita" Marquez.

Pacquiao and his business manager, Rod Nazario, will first proceed to San Francisco before heading for New York on Feb. 21 to rendezvous with promoter Murad Muhammad.

The three will then meet with HBO's Kerry Davis at the cable giant's New York headquarters to sign the contract for the fight where Pacquiao's camp expects to get no less than a $1-million purse.

As things stand, HBO appears inclined to give Pacquiao his asking price. Marquez, through promoter Bob Arum, has indicated they are seeking a purse parity with Pacquiao.

Pacquiao (38-2-1, 30 KOs), the Ring Magazine's featherweight king, is up against a worthy opponent in the orthodox-fighting Marquez (42-2, 33 KOs).

It will mark Pacquiao's first outing as a regular 126-lb fighter since his celebrated conquest of former Mexican great Marco Antonio Barrera last November.

Pacquiao, who relinquished his IBF super-bantamweight crown last month to concentrate on the next higher division, is expected to be back in Manila after the meeting with HBO and Muhammad.

Isedeno fires 67, leads caddies' tourney by 2

ANTIPOLO CITY—Veteran Joey Isedeno sparkled with a 67 yesterday to grab a two-stroke lead and again moved closer to winning the Uratex National Caddies men's crown.

Isedeno, the 47-year-old Negros Occidental Golf and Country club campaigner, sank putts inside eight feet in taming the par-70, 5,396-yard Valley Golf and Country Club's Executive course, posting a two-round total of 140.

Alvin Mijares lost three strokes in the last two holes and dropped to second at 142 with a 70.

Mijares bogeyed the 17th and double-bogeyed the 18th in an unexpected collapse although he remained in contention for the top prize of P75,000 and a television set.

With Pepito Jomar backing up Mijares with a 68 and Antonio Locanas scoring a 74, host Valley wrested the men's team lead with 435.

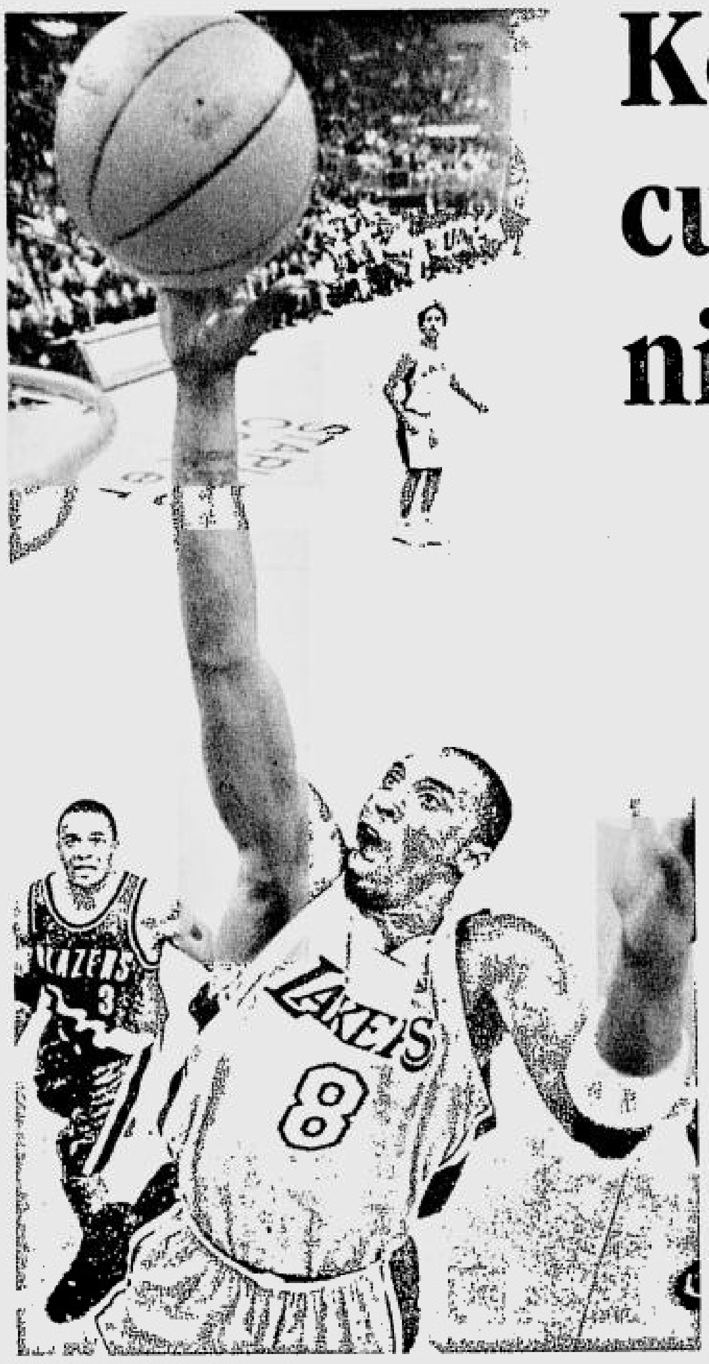
Meanwhile, Susana Delfino of Kagitingan scored a first round 78 to take a five-shot lead over Manila Southwoods' Nerissa Ogares in the battle for the women's individual crown worth P20,000.

"My short game was good and my putting was simply superb," Isedeno said in Tagalog. "If I can keep this up, I may finally win."

Isedeno made his debut in 1996 in the tournament the late business tycoon Robert Cheng launched in 1988 and wound up second.

Isedeno collected birdies on the second, sixth, eighth and ninth to go four under at the turn.

Kobe takes up cudgels as LA nips Portland


BRYANT soars for a slam dunk against the Blazers. REUTERS

LOS ANGELES—Kobe Bryant is finally getting healthy, and it's showing on the court with one notable exception—at the foul line.

Bryant had 31 points, eight rebounds and a season-high 10 assists Tuesday night to lead the Los Angeles Lakers to an 89-86 victory over the Portland Trail Blazers.

"I would say so," Bryant replied when asked if this was one of his best all-around games of the season. "I played pretty well tonight."

It was just Bryant's fifth game including the All-Star game since he sprained his right shoulder Jan. 12.

He missed six games after that, played in two and then missed seven more after cutting his right index finger Jan. 29.

Bryant said he feels better physically than he has in quite some time.

"My legs feel pretty good," he said. "If my legs can carry me, the rest will follow."

Bryant scored his team's last five points including a tiebreaking left-handed layup with 31.8 seconds remaining and a foul shot with seven seconds left.

Normally an excellent free throw shooter, he made only 5-of-9 and missed one when given an opportunity at a three-point play on his tiebreaking layup and another that could have given the Lakers a four-point lead near the end.

The Blazers thus had a chance to tie the game in the final seconds, but Damon Stoudamire missed a 3-pointer and Horace Grant got the rebound as time expired.

Bryant said his shoulder still bothers him a bit, locking up when he shoots free throws.

Webber suspended

In Sacramento, California, Kings forward Chris Webber was suspended for eight games: five for violating the NBA's drug policy and three for pleading guilty to lying to a grand jury.

Webber, a five-time All-Star, has missed the entire season after offseason surgery on his left knee. He was activated from the injured list on Monday, but the punishments will delay his return for at least two more weeks. *AP*

Complete results: New Orleans 89, Indiana 75; New York 92, Detroit 88, Miami 97, Utah 85; Milwaukee 127, Orlando 104, Minnesota 110, Phoenix 95, Memphis 109, Dallas 92, Chicago 75, Toronto 73; Houston 107, Washington 81, Denver 106, Philadelphia 85, Sacramento 127, Boston 111, LA Lakers 89, Portland 86.

GEISLER (center) watches as Tshomlee Go and Rivero spar.

2 more Pinoy jins make Athens Games

TWO more Petron national taekwondo team standouts—Donald David Geisler and Mary Antoinette Rivero—have made it to the Athens Olympics this August.

Geisler and Rivero, both fighting in the welterweight class, bagged a silver medal each in the recent Asian qualifying tournament in Bangkok to join flyweight Tshomlee Go as the country's campaigners in the Athens taekwondo competition.

Geisler, one of four Filipino representatives in the Sydney Olympics four years ago, booked his second Olympic stint by besting New Zealand's Harmihs Wybrow, 8-0; Singapore's Tze Chap Toh, 13-3; and Australia's Danile Trenton, 10-9.

Trenton won a silver when taekwondo made its debut as an Olympic medal sport in Sydney.

Rivero, 16-year-old St. Paul's Pasig star, whipped Indonesia's Cinta Herru Berliana, 4-3, and New Zealand's Caroline Bartasek, 4-1.

Go was the first Filipino jin to earn an Olympic slot in Athens. He did it by competing in the world qualifying tournament in Paris last Dec. 4-7.

"Our three athletes made a splendid performance against tough, veteran rivals," said Philippine Taekwondo Association vice president Sung Chong Hong.

PTA president Robert N. Aventajado congratulated the three Olympic-bound jins, optimistic that Geisler, Rivero and Go would do good in Athens.

Aventajado feels that taekwondo may yet deliver the country's first Olympic gold.

Four years ago, Geisler, Roberto Cruz, Eva Marie Ditan and Jasmin Strachan competed in the Sydney Olympics.

Olympic berths at stake in Asian triathlon tilt

WORLD-CLASS triathletes from Kazakhstan, Japan, China and Hong Kong will be out to outwit one another for berths to the 2004 Athens Olympic Games in August when they compete in the Speedo Asian Triathlon Championship on April 4 at the Subic Bay Freeport.

Heading the men's field in the 14-nation event are former world champion and Sydney Olympics veteran Kazakh Dmitri Gaag and 2002-03 ATC titlist Danil Sapunov.

Gaag is currently ranked No. 9 in the world while Sapunov is at 43rd.

Defending champion Japanese Shizuka Kusuna and 18th-ranked Machiko Nakanishi lead the distaff side in the meet sponsored by Philippine Sports Commission, Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority, Reliv and Gatorade and organized by Triathlon Association of the Philippines (TRAP).

On April 3, triathletes aged 20 years and over take centerstage for the Asian Age-Group Triathlon championship.

Listing for the age-group competition is ongoing at TRAP Office, Room 201, Building Alpha, Philsports, Pasig City (0916-2654-209/Fabie or 0920-6030898/Dong); POC-NSA Center, PSC Administration Building, P. Ocampo Street, Malate, Manila (523-6280); and all Speedo concept stores in Metro Manila and Cebu. Registration ends April 2.

For online registration, contact contactus@triathlon.org.ph.

Rosales gets Global boost

By Jong Arcano

"SHE is world-class, the best in her craft. And she brings pride to the Filipino."

Those superlatives from the top honcho of a blue-chip company justified a megabuck sponsorship deal as LPGA Tour campaigner Jenny Rosales yesterday became the first golfer endorser of PLDT Global.

As part of the six-digit deal meant to boost her stint in the world's biggest ladies circuit, the logo of PLDT Global - a wholly-owned subsidiary of PLDT providing telecommunications services to key cities worldwide - will be on Rosales' apparel and bag.

Her image will also be on the prepaid cards used by millions of Filipinos based in key cities all over the globe.

"It's an honor for me to be carrying the logo of PLDT Global in my quest for a first tournament victory in the LPGA," said Rosales during a press conference at the Manila Golf Club.

Al Panlilio, president of PLDT Global, said that Rosales, represents everything that PLDT Global is.

"Jenny's ability to challenge the best players in the world of golf represents our vision to be considered one of the major players in the field of telecommunications," said Panlilio.

Rosales, as the only homegrown athlete playing in the LPGA Tour, gives the company the opportunity to reach out to its target market, according to Panlilio.

Her newfound relationship with a giant company will see Rosales gracing PLDT Global affairs here and abroad.

Jenny will also be endorsing the Switzerland-based Bally for shoes and apparel, one of the most expensive in the golf market. She was picked to join multi-titled Englishman Nick Faldo in representing the brand this season.

Apart from the support she's enjoying from the famed American Eye Center, she will also be using Ping clubs and Titleist balls.

Rosales leaves for Goldcoast, Australia this Saturday to play in the ANZ Ladies Masters.

The big day in Jenny's career was also graced by her mother Lourdes, American Eye Center patrons Jerome Velasco and Jack Arroyo, Freddie Mendoza of Manila Southwoods where she trains, and coach Bong Lopez.

PANLILIO (third from left) presents to Rosales an enlarged Prepaid Calling Card bearing her image for international distribution. Looking on are Enrique Yu, general manager and COO of PLDT Global, Jerome Velasco and Dr. Jack Arroyo of the American Eye Center and Freddie Mendoza of Manila Southwoods. ERIK ARAZAS

SPORTS TV

Compiled by Lorenzo Manguiat

BASKETBALL: NBA - Mavs vs Cavs, 8 a.m. (r- 10 p.m.); Solar Sports; Spurs vs Raptors: 7 p.m.; IBC 13, Vintage NBA: 11 a.m.; Solar Sports

NBA Greatest Games - Nuggets vs Sonics, Game 5, 1994, Western First Round: 12 noon

US NCAA: 2 p.m.; Solar Sports - The Marquette Golden Eagles face the Arizona Wildcats in this NCAA showcase

TENNIS: ATP Siebel Open: 12 noon (r), Star Sports - Do you know your way to San Jose? If so see great semifinal tennis action from this city in Northern California.

2004 Australian Open: 4:30 p.m.; Solar Sports - Take another look at the first grand slam event of the year.

49th gold elates . . .

From page A21

swimmers after she was informed of the belated victory by First Gentleman Mike Arroyo, the top fund-raiser of the RP delegation.

The PSC head said it was the First Gentleman who urged him to file the letter of appeal to the SEAG Federation during the SEA Games Sports Ministers' Meeting at the Daewoo Hotel in Hanoi.

The four swimmers were earlier disqualified after winning the event due to what was later determined to be a computer glitch.

Buhain added that the relay team members will be granted incentives for their gold medal win.

Mendoza, Molina, Piccio and Kalaw were disqualified from clinching the gold medal in the 4x200 freestyle relay because of a misinterpretation on the computer report that Mendoza jumped too soon even before Molina could touch the pad.

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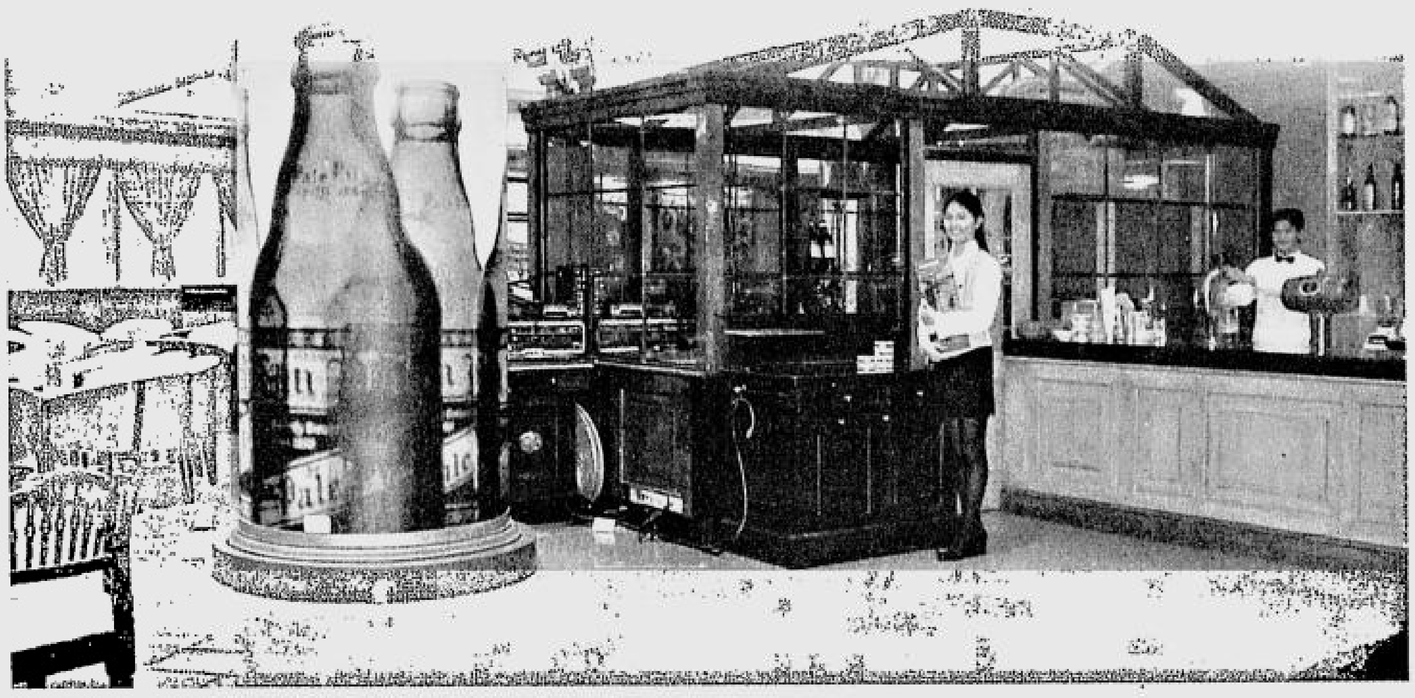

JOIN the merriest crowd at Fiesta San Miguel during its Happy Hour from 5:30 to 9 p.m. daily for only P270++ and enjoy freshly brewed San Miguel beer with some of the country's top bands entertaining nightly. Tuesday is Fiesta San Miguel's "Ladies Night". Lady guests will not only receive a rose but are also entitled to perks such as 20 percent discount on food, P200++ beer-all-you-can from 5:30-9 p.m. and 50 percent discount on selected drinks from 9 p.m. onwards.

Birthday celebrants will receive a complimentary cake and a souvenir snap shot with friends. Meanwhile, ongoing until Feb. 29, The Cafe of the Dusit Hotel Nikko lets you have a taste of what the restaurant's chefs have cooked up for you. Guaranteed to delight your palate with its ala carte offering such as the Scallop and Prawn Duet, Beef Kamto Sinigang and Honey Chicken.

For queries, call 867-3308.

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Astoria Plaza has special graduation party packages just for you. With rates ranging from P29,000 and above, Astoria Plaza is the perfect venue for your parties. What's more, hold your functions on Sundays and get 10 percent discount on your banquet rates.

For inquiries and reservations, visit or call 687-1111 or log on to www.astoriaplaza.com.

Waterfront Cebu City Hotel and Casino launches service hotline

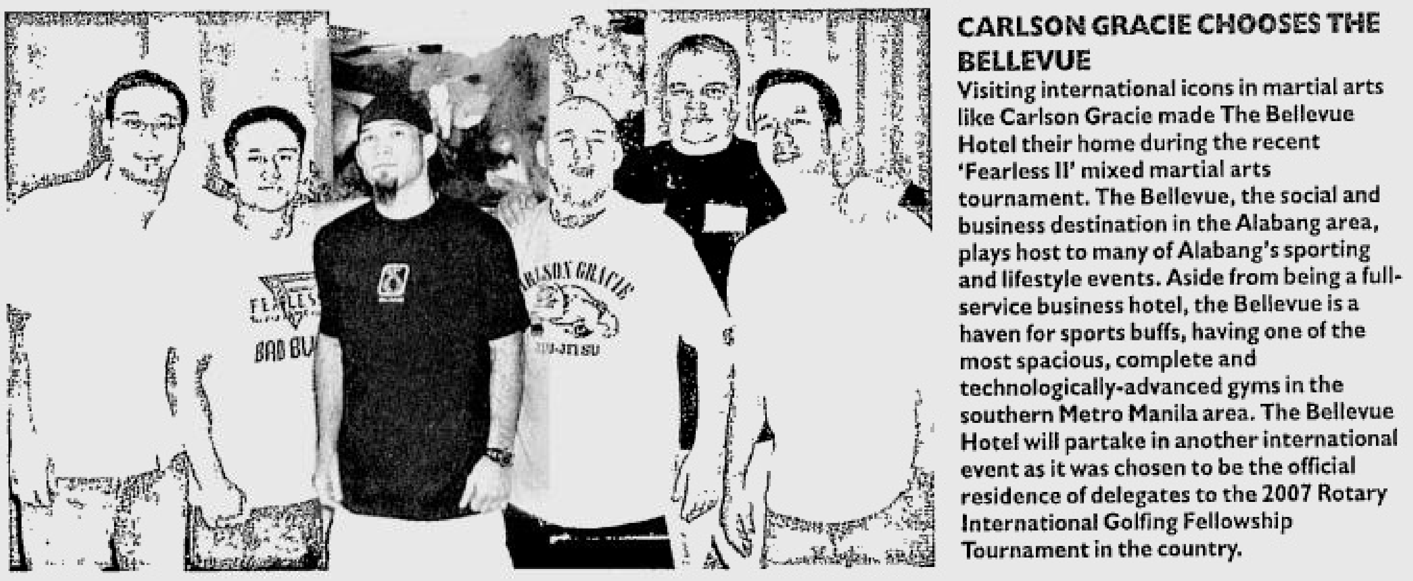
WATERFRONT Cebu City Hotel & Casino (WCCHC) now guarantees guests of a hassle-free stay when it comes to accommodating their varied, discriminating needs. The Waterfront Service Hotline promises to grant guests' requests at the touch of their fingertips, through one number in the comfort of their rooms.

Spearheaded by the Hotel's Front Desk, the Waterfront Service Hotline presents convenience through the magic of one button. Whether its information on the city, a late check-out or message request, an extra bed, or a bar of soap, guests now have the convenience of dialing just one number for all these needs.

Operating 24 hours a day and seven days a week, the Waterfront Service Hotline might just prove to be the busiest section of the hotel.

"This will definitely free our guests from the humdrum hassles of being transferred from one department to another when they call, or from choosing among a barrage of numbers to dial," quips Director of Rooms Dindo Girado, "It truly promotes state-of-the-art convenience".

This innovative service is meant to provide guests with the best customer service and support. This is part and parcel of the all-Filipino chain's unique hotels' thrust for unparalleled service and amenities.



CARLSON GRACIE CHOOSES THE BELLEVUE
Visiting international icons in martial arts like Carlson Gracie made The Bellevue Hotel their home during the recent 'Fearless II' mixed martial arts tournament. The Bellevue, the social and business destination in the Alabang area, plays host to many of Alabang's sporting and lifestyle events. Aside from being a full-service business hotel, the Bellevue is a haven for sports buffs, having one of the most spacious, complete and technologically-advanced gyms in the southern Metro Manila area. The Bellevue Hotel will partake in another international event as it was chosen to be the official residence of delegates to the 2007 Rotary International Golfing Fellowship Tournament in the country.

Patti and James for love struck Pinoys

DollyWood

Dolly Ann Carvajal

I HAD a splendid Valentine's night watching **Patti Austin** and **James Ingram** at the CCP Open Grounds last Saturday. Patti's voice was impeccable as she sang hit after hit. She did not need to don fancy diva outfits or mount elaborate production numbers. Her crystal-clear voice alone was more than enough to keep the audience enthralled. The multi-awarded singer is amazed how Pinoys simply adore her music.

"I don't know if it's the air or the water, but there's something in Manila that makes everybody know good music. If American Idol were to have an audition here they would have a hard time accommodating all the talented singers around. It's my biggest joy to perform in Manila," she said.

I wonder if Patti would consider relocating here. She will surely get an SRO crowd wherever she performs. Pinoys are suckers for her type of music. I first heard Patti's "Say You Love me" when I was still in high school, but when she sang the song that night, it seemed to have a whole new meaning to me. All her love songs are hauntingly familiar, but they make your heart flutter anew.

James Ingram gave a very soulful rendition of his timeless hits. It's like every note was punctuated with his heartbeat. He felt every single line of each song. James even shared some profound insights about love. "I read somewhere that men can only use one side of their brain at a time while women can use both the right and the left side simultaneously. No wonder we can't figure out women most of the time."

There were moments though that his constant walking on stage was distracting. He might have been jittery or just too excited. But his powerful voice compensated for his unnecessary movements. James even did an encore and showered the ladies with roses and wooed them with one-liners set to music.

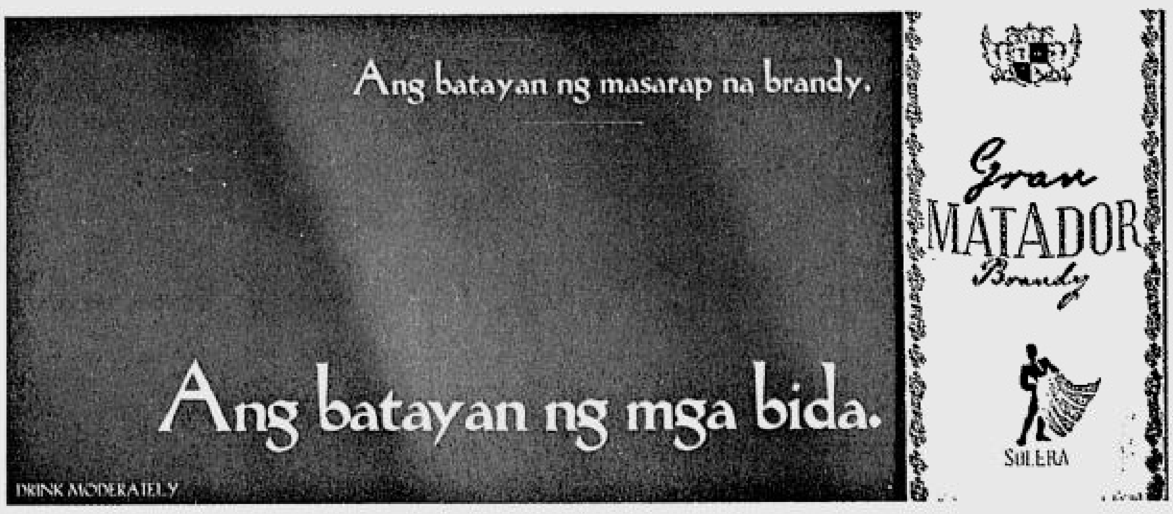
When Patti and James did some duets ("Baby Come to Me," "How Do you Keep The Music Playing?"), it was pure rapture. The crowd lapped up their melodic bantering, which was done candidly. The romance specialist duo promised to be back although their music will never really leave love struck Pinoys be it V-day or not.

New sked for TV show

STARTING this week, my show with **TJ Manotoc** and **Maureen Larrazabal** "Celebrity Dat Com" will be aired every Friday from 8 p.m. to 9 p.m. on Channel 13.

We promise you more exciting and interesting features that tackle showbiz matters and beyond. We never repeat juicy "chikas' so you better watch and listen closely.

For feedback e-mail friends_elpueblo@yahoo.com or dollyanne@truefaithband.com



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Runaway Jury marks the first pairing of Hollywood legends GENE HACKMAN and DUSTIN HOFFMAN.

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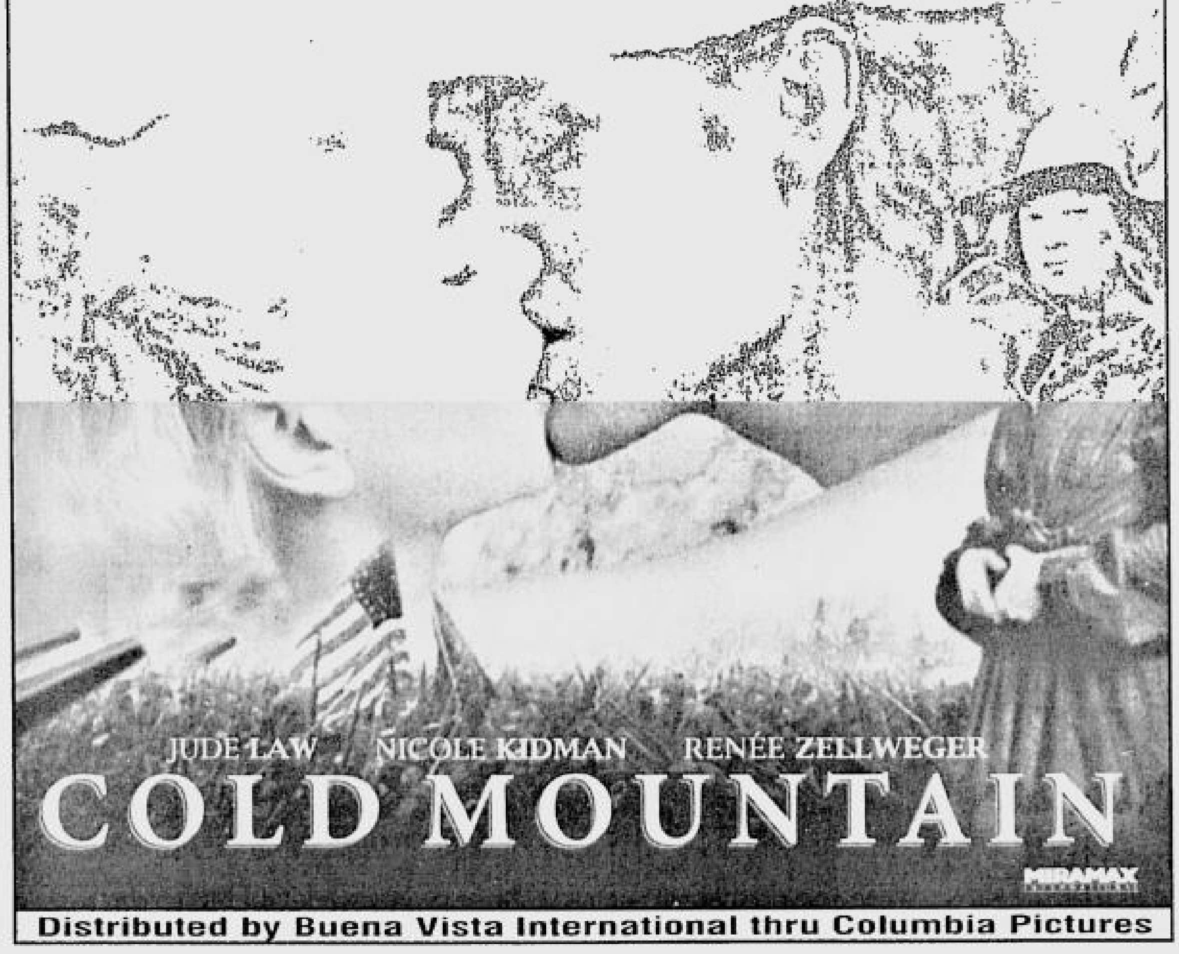

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12:05, 2:15, 4:25, 6:35, 9:00

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10:10, 1:00, 4:00, 7:00, 10:00

CHASING LIBERTY
10:20, 1 2:30, 2:40, 4:50

BONE SNATCHER
12:30, 2:35, 4:50, 6:55, 9:00

21 GRAMS
11:45, 2:00, 4:15, 6:40, 9:00

KUYA
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KUYA
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WISHING STAIRS
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RUNAWAY JURY
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HAUNTED MANSION
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KUYA
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CHASING LIBERTY
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RUNAWAY JURY
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MASTER AND COMMANDER/ MYSTIC RIVER
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MILAN
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WISHING STAIRS
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MILAN
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RUNAWAY JURY
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COLD MOUNTAIN
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9 COLD MOUNTAIN
10 21 GRAMS

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3 21 GRAMS
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9 KUYA
10 BONE SNATCHER

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12 MASTER AND COMMANDER

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8 DIABLO

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11:1 FS/11:40
MF/2:15/4:45/7:15/9:25
LFS/9:50 LMF/12:00
END

2 COLD MOUNTAIN
11:45 FS/12:20
MF/3:30/6:40/9:20
LFS/9:50 LMF/12:25
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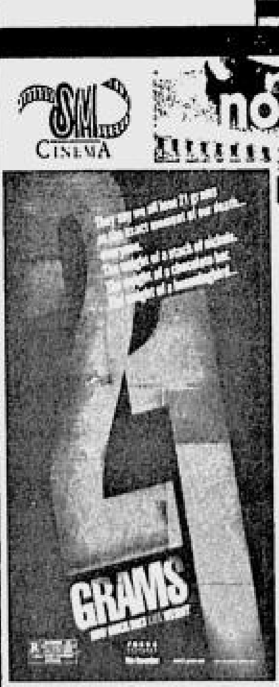

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6 GOLD (SDDS) COLD MOUNTAIN
7 GOLD (DOLBY) 21 GRAMS
8 (DTS) KUYA
9 (DOLBY) TOTALLY BLOND
10 (SDDS) TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSCARE

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3 MILAN

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3 COLD MOUNTAIN
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4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX) GOOD LAWYER'S WIFE
5

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3 COLD MOUNTAIN
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2 MILAN
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4 IN THE CUT

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3 KUYA

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3 KUYA
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NOW SHOWING

JIRO rules in "Magnifico," a lyrical, even whimsical peek at death and poverty.

How he …

From page A28

won the Best Picture award at the Kinderfilmfest, according to the director of such teenage hit flicks like "Bagets 1," which featured a 14-year-old Aga Muhlach.

The adults, too, especially the members of the five-man international jury, huddled around De los Reyes and asked him questions about "Magnifico."

Loopholes

"One of them was a Swiss director, who told me that he was looking for a scene in the movie where the character played by by Isabella de Leon would forget that she was supposed to be a palsy and get out of character. In other words, naghahanap siya ng butas (He was looking for loopholes). But he also told me, he couldn't find any."

De los Reyes said he was also asked if Isabella really was a palsy.

"I asked them, what do you think? I said, I was asked the same question in an open forum after the film was shown. One of the people in the audience answered it for me. He said, 'I think she's an actress because she says her line on cue.' Well, that is also my answer."

The jurors were more amazed after De los Reyes told them that Isabella was a comedy actress, who appears regularly in a television sitcom. But nothing could beat their incredulity when De los Reyes told them that "Magnifico" was made for P27 million, or about 500,000 Euros, which the Europeans said was'how much a documentary would cost, according to the director.

"I told them, give me that budget and I will give you a movie like 'Magnifico,'" De los Reyes said.

Re-issue

A film foreign distributor has already shown interest in releasing the movie in Canada and other parts of the globe, De los Reyes said. It will also be re-issued in local theaters in March, said Sevilla.

By then, Sevilla is hoping that more people would watch the movie and appreciate a good film.

Sevilla has also set aside plans to produce a bold movie, which could be done in barely a week and produced on a P5 million budget.

She said: "I'm putting that plan aside. I'd like to concentrate on making quality films like 'Magnifico."

Hopefully, the local movie-going public would also be ready for such films.

Oscar fever heats up

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

SOME weeks ago, we tried to second-guess the 2003 Oscars and came up with what we thought would be chosen as finalists in the key Best Picture ("The Return of the King"), Best Director (**Peter Jackson**), Best Actor (**Sean Penn**) and Best Actress (**Charlize Theron** in "Monster") categories.

What do you know, all four of our bets did get into the list of Oscar nominees—and even did well in the Golden Globe awards. Will our luck and pluck hold out, resulting in Oscar victories as well for them on Feb. 29? In less than two weeks, we'll know.

More important than speculating about the 2003 Oscar winners, however, is making sure we see the finalist films in question, some of which are now showing in town. So, let's go out of our way to sample the previous year's best movies first hand, to make our involvement in the Oscars more proactive.

After all, film awards are supposed to come up with touchstones of excellence for other filmmakers to aspire to, but if we don't get to view the movies that are supposed to embody those touchstones, we won't benefit from their excellent qualities.

It's true what some cynics say: You can't eat film awards.—But you can certainly learn from them!

Oscar finalists reissued

ASIDE from the Academy Award finalists now showing here for the first time, two nominee productions are being reissued, to take advantage of the "Oscar fever" heating up the film scene just before the awards night on Feb. 29 (telecast live here on March 1).

"Mystic River" and "Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World" are again showing on local screens, so people who haven't seen them should take advantage of this second chance to appreciate these much-lauded movies.

The latter film is especially not to be missed because its director, **Peter Weir**, has just won BAFTA's Best Director plum over the highly-touted Peter Jackson of "The Return of the King" fame.

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1 MILAN
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7:15, 9:45
PG-13

2 COLD MOUNTAIN
11:00, 2:00, 5:00
8:00, 11:00
R-18

3 RUNAWAY JURY
11:30, 2:20, 5:10
8:00, 10:50
R-13

4 KUYA
12:15, 2:45, 5:05
7:25, 9:45
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Ali 7	CHASING LIBERTY

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CALENDAR GIRLS

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QUEZON CITY	
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ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
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REMAR	X-MEN 2
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CINEMA-6	TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE
CINEMA-7	MAGIC KITCHEN
CINEMA-8	GUSTO KO SA LALAKI (R)
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	RUNAWAY JURY
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	HAUNTED MANSION
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	COLD MOUNTAIN
CINEMA-12	CHASING LIBERTY
CINEMA-14	KUYA
CINEMA-15	MILAN
LORES	
CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
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(LAS PINAS)	MILAN
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CINEMA-2	CLOSED
CINEMA-4	CLOSED
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(PARANAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
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ENTERTAINMENT

DIREK MARIO J'S BERLIN COUP

How he almost did not make it to the filmfest

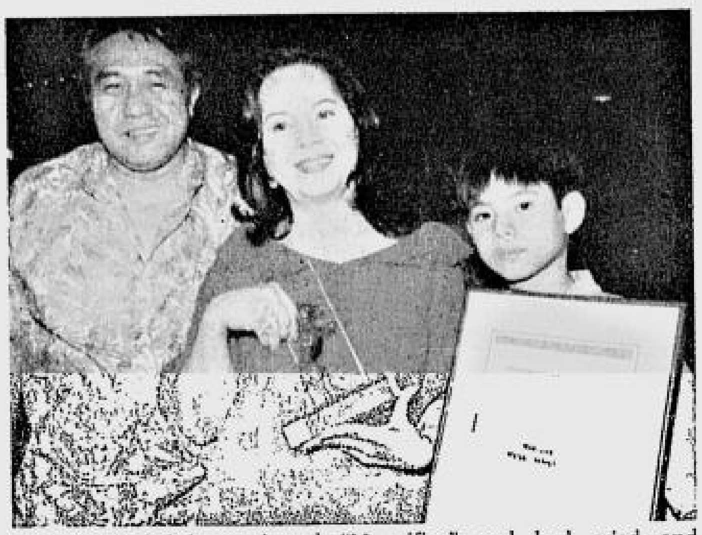
By Nini Valera

DIRECTOR Mario J. de los Reyes had to take a ride on the Metro Rail Transit during the early morning rush hour to reach the German Embassy in Makati before 11 a.m. last Thursday.

This was the first time that De los Reyes took the MRT to escape the traffic on Edsa. From the MRT station, he boarded a cab, and got lost on the way to the embassy. What he didn't know was that his landmark, Global Bank, was no longer in the marquee of the Solid Bank building, which houses the German Embassy. But at 11 a.m. sharp, he was knocking on Window 3 of the embassy where he was promised a German visa by 1 p.m. the same day.

By 9 p.m. also on Thursday, De los Reyes was on board a Swissair flight for Zurich on his way to the German capital of Berlin, where he was to receive the Crystal Bear Award for the film "Magnifico" on Saturday night.

Last Tuesday, De los Reyes was back in Manila from Hong Kong, clutching his Crystal Bear, the trophy for winning the Grand Prix for Best Feature Film at the 27th Kinderfilmfest of the Berlin Film Festival.



DIREK Mario J. de los Reyes, producer Violet Sevilla, and actor Jiro Maño show the Crystal Bear trophy and a plaque given to "Magnifico at the Berlin Film Festival last week.

"They (festival organizers) did not expect me to arrive," De los Reyes told a press gathering at Annabel's Restaurant on Tomas Morato, Quezon City, last Tuesday night. "So when the man, Thomas Mayer, who wrote me the e-mail, which I received at dawn last Thursday, asking me to come to the awards ceremony, saw me, he hugged me, instead of just shaking my hand. He said I deserved more than a handshake."

More than a hug

De los Reyes deserves more than a hug, according to producer Violet Sevilla, whose Violet Films mounted "Magnifico" last year for P27 million. The film, which starred child actor Jiro Maño, was a flop when it was shown here in February last year, earning only P5 million at the tills, and another P5 million for cable and television rights, according to Sevilla.

"I was truly disappointed," she admitted. "But how can I still be upset now? I did not want to make more films, but now, how can I stop?

"I am looking for a good material, a good cast, but I will be asking Direk Mario to direct my next movie. How can I not ask him to direct my next movie when he brought this honor home?"

The movie, about a young boy whose kindness surpassed the squalor and misery of poverty, also collected an award from the children's jury at the Berlin Film Festival, which ended last Sunday.

Cash prize

This is the first time that one film was both given the Best Picture honors by both the international and children's jury, explained De los Reyes.

"The two awards are of equal value," he said.

The award comes with 7,500 euros, De los Reyes added.

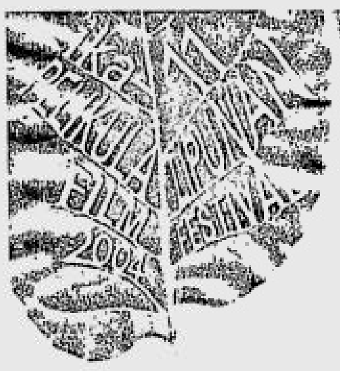
For the first time in his life, De los Reyes was mobbed by fans, most of whom were young children, who had viewed "Magnifico" and had cried and laughed at the right places when it was shown after the awards ceremony.

"The children were so thankful to us adults for bringing a film for them to watch," De los Reyes said.

This is the first time that an Asian Film had

HOW/ A26

DID YOU KNOW... ACTRESS Nora Aunor has finally succumbed to the skin whitening craze. The dark-skinned superstar has been taking whitening treatments at Ellen's Whitening Center on Timog Avenue in Quezon City. Skin specialists at the center swear Nora will emerge fairer, whiter and blemish-free once she's finished with her program. If results are up to Ellen's standards, Nora will become the center's new endorser, joining beauty queen Melanie Marquez and actresses Azenith Briones and Elizabeth Oropesa.



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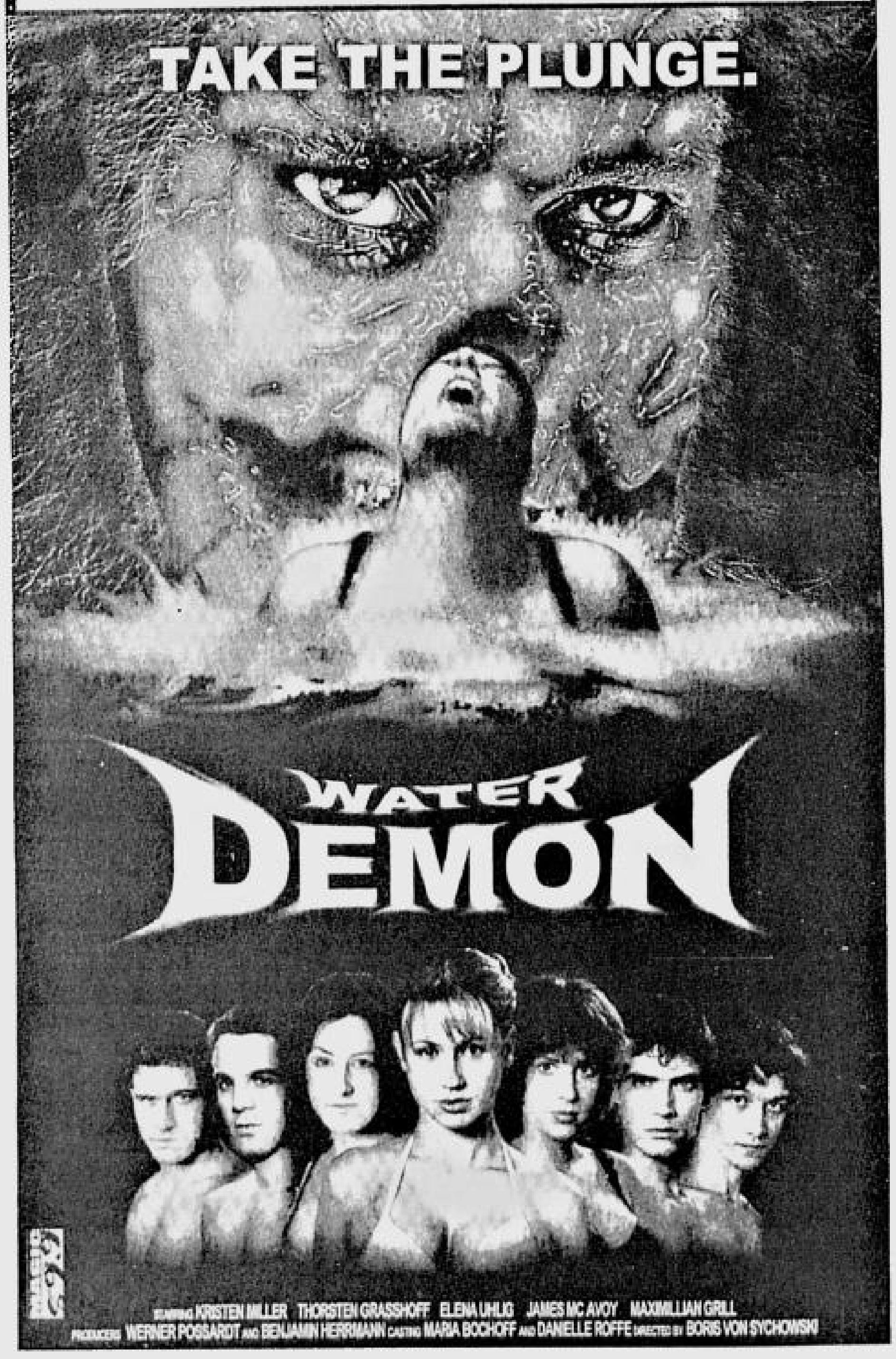
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WINNER
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WINNER
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WINNER
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Best Original Screenplay
2003 Online Film Critics Society
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BEST ACTOR
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BSP sees peso recovery starting April

By Doris C. Dumlao

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INDICATORS

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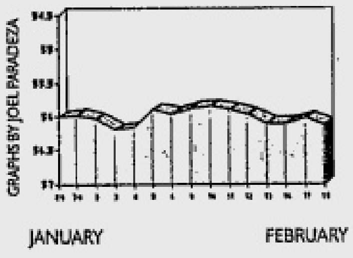
PESO-DOLLAR RATE



GRAPHS BY JOEL PARADEZA

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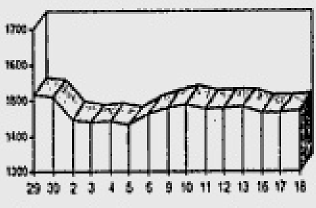

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Reuters

STOCK QUOTATIONS ON PAGE B-8

RETAIL MAGNATE

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Families that Own Asia

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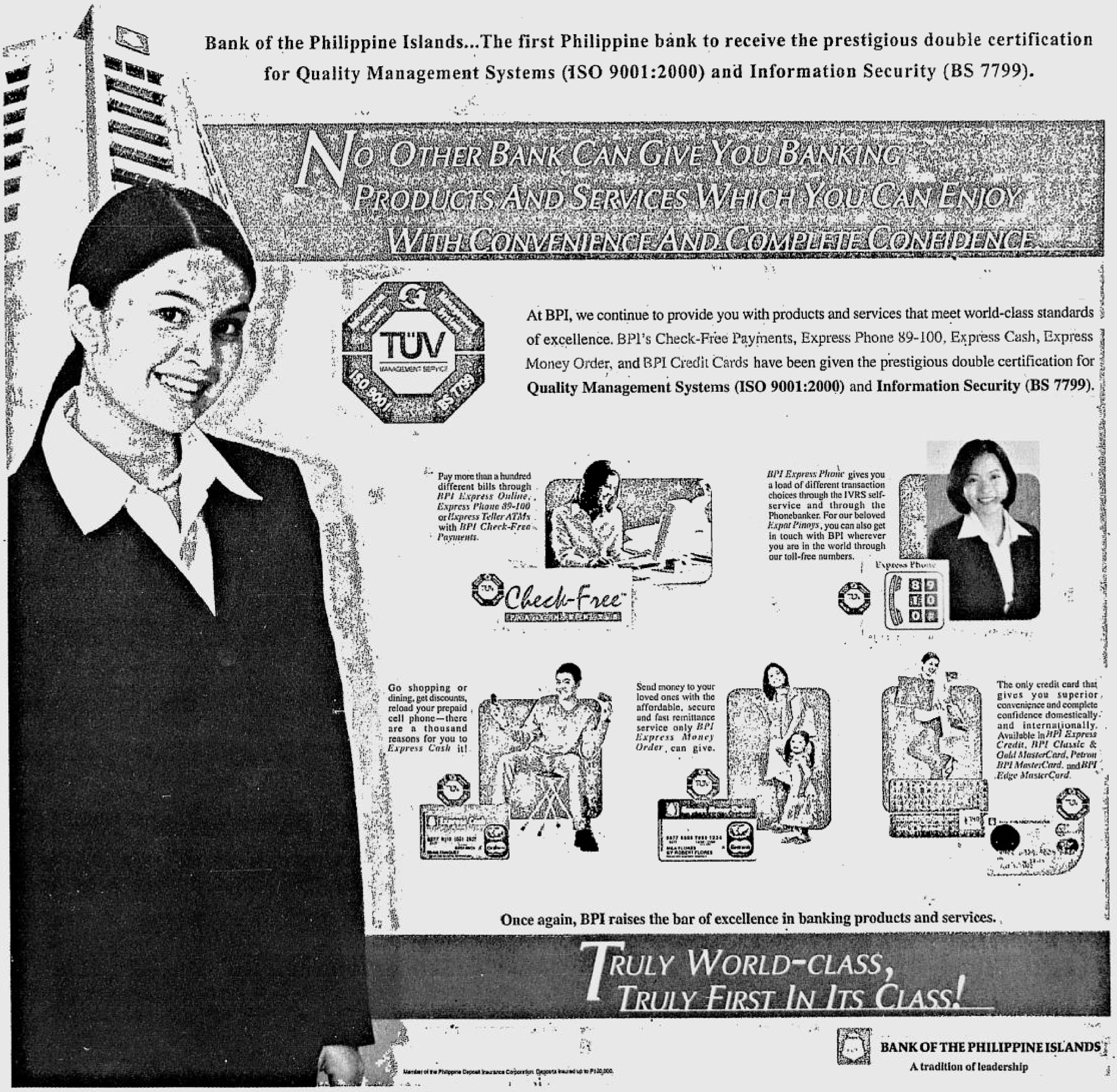
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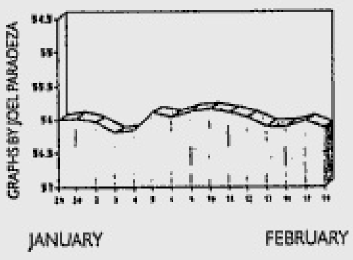

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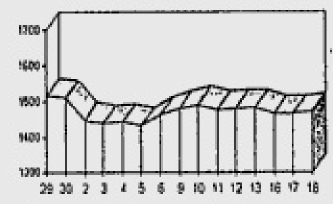

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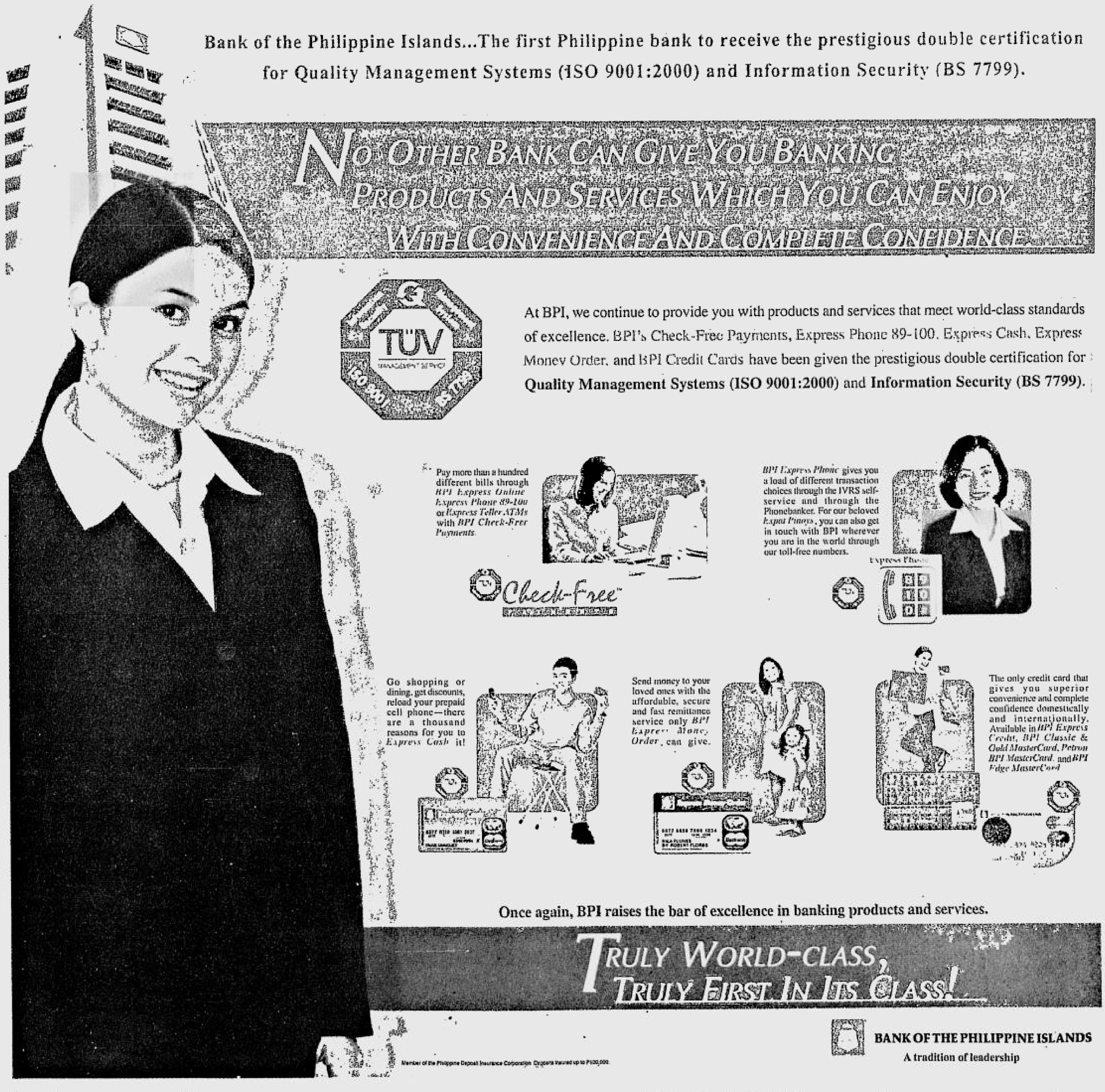
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CalPERS defers divestment from RP

By Doris Dumlao and Elizabeth Sanchez

CALIFORNIA Public Employees' Retirement System (CalPERS), the biggest US public pension fund, on Tuesday said it would delay divesting any assets in the Philippines for at least 30 days while it reviews recent legislation that could make the country a more attractive emerging market for the fund.

"CalPERS gave the Philippines 30 days to work with Wilshire and the fund's third-party sources to include (in the review) most recent data on financial market and labor reforms," the Philippines' investor relations officer Cora Guidote said yesterday.

The pension fund was scheduled to release its decision on whether it would remove the country from its list of preferred investment sites yesterday, after a one-year "curing" period.

The country faces removal from CalPERS' list due to poor ratings given by the pension fund's consultant Wilshire and Associates for three straight years.

In Wilshire's latest assessment, the Philippines obtained a total score of 1.86, a bit better than the 1.46 rating last year but still short of the minimum score of 2.0 to qualify in CalPERS' list of investments sites.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas welcomed CalPERS' 30-day reprieve, noting this would give the country a chance to include in the review its most recent initiatives.

"I'm happy to hear that and I hope they will consider recent developments that represent positive inputs, such as the passage of economic reform bills," BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura said yesterday. The Congress recently passed measures rationalizing the documentary stamp tax system and encouraging asset securitization.

In making its assessment on the Philippines, Wilshire cited the country's failure to strike itself off the Paris-based Financial Action Task Force's blacklist of countries deemed uncooperative in the fight against money laundering.

It also cited problems in civil liberties, accounting standards, labor relations, and market transparency.

Of the pension fund's $130 million worth of investible funds, the Philippines has a share of only about $25 million but outlook on the country has a significant influence on some investors.

Local fund managers, however, do not expect any major change in investor sentiment in the stock market to arise from CalPERS' move.

"Despite its (CalPERS) decision to buy time, everybody will remain in a wait-and-see mode. Although the market is up, investors are trading cautiously. CalPERS' decision is a reflection of that," Vittorio Gomez, trading head for Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.'s trust department, said.

Fund managers also said the 30-day lag would allow CalPERS to factor in the impact of the Supreme Court's forthcoming decision on the citizenship of leading presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr.

Allan Yu, assistant vice president forMetro Bank Trust Banking Group, the second largest fund manager in the country, said this reprieve was "better than saying they're getting out of the Philippines."

Gov't to guarantee Napocor loans

By Michelle V. Remo

THE GOVERNMENT has agreed to guarantee $1.5 billion worth of borrowings that National Power Corp. needs to meet its financing requirement for the year.

The amount, however, is lower than the $1.8 billion earlier requested by Napocor.

According to a source from the Department of Finance (DOF), the government has decided to guarantee only $1.5 billion as it deemed that Napocor would not need $1.8 billion during the year.

"The government agreed to guarantee only $1.5 billion, not because it cannot afford to grant the requested $1.8 billion, but because it believes Napocor only needs $1.5 billion," the source said.

The source added that the government had considered mostly Napocor's cash requirement for the year and did not consider much of its capital expenditure requirements. The government official explained that since capital expenditures were not usually paid in cash, the $1.5 billion worth of guarantee was enough.

Napocor is expected to raise the $1.5 billion within the next two months either through loans or through the sale of bonds. The source added that the power firm had already started accepting proposals from banks.

The source said the government was hoping that Napocor would get loans whose maturities would be manageable. While long-term loans are preferable, the government is expecting Napocor to go for medium-term loans since no bank might agree to lend for the long-term.

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Bulling point

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

FIRST the real bad news...

Whether they are in the boardrooms, in the stockrooms, or in the cafeterias, people in business are watching a particular citizenship case.

Such a case should be insignificant, ordinarily, but this one involves a movie actor-turned-politician known in my neighborhood as "Sideburns."

As you know, unless you are busy trying to eke out a decent living, and not just stealing our tax money, some unheard-of lawyers filed case after case against Sideburns.

They sought to disqualify the leading presidential candidate at the moment. This is, at least, if you believe the surveys, which most people do.

The polls indicated that almost 40 percent of the people wanted Sideburns to become the next president. He probably will be unless ... Which explains those cases.

* * *

ACTING on their own—really—the lawyers alleged that Sideburns, actually, well, ahh, is NOT a Filipino. He thus cannot run for president.

But then the Comelec dismissed their case, amid a lot of noise about some tampering of public documents which could even send Sideburns burning in hell.

And so they went to the Supreme Court. That's when the family-size worry started making its rounds in business.

For it is something which is behind every business person's head whenever politics reaches boiling point in this country. And that is ... well, public agitation.

* * *

ONE concern in business is, of course, whether or not Sideburns is fit to become the president. Another is, the very public reaction to the Supreme Court ruling on his case.

A lot of people are saying that the Supreme Court is poised to rule to disqualify Sideburns, no matter what. It is just a matter of time.

The question in business is this: Since the polls showed that Sideburns enjoyed a good mass support, particularly among the urban poor, how will the "fans" take the Supreme Court ruling?

That is the worry in business. It is bad news to the business people, big or small. Will the *masa* take it just like the way those poor people sleep at night? You know—sitting down?

* * *

BASED on one scenario, which is whispered in boardrooms and, er, "executive dining areas," which is actually different from the "canteen," civil unrest is possible.

In fact, some people took the recent media statement from the Supreme Court itself as an obvious sign.

The Supreme Court said that it did not fear the supporters of Sideburns, whatever their reaction might be to any ruling.

Now, why would the Supreme Court state the obvious? It goes without saying, Paquing, because it is always assumed that the Supreme Court fears nothing.

* * *

BUT to some people, the statement merely showed that even the Supreme Court was trying to ready the public mind for a Sideburns disqualification.

Sure, mass psychology can go a long way toward pacifying the mob, as the whispered scenario goes, but there is always a limit to its effectiveness.

For this cute administration of Gloriaetta, therefore, that scenario says that the challenge is how to win in the ensuing fight for public opinion.

Really, how do you make people, the supposedly "uneducated" masa, choose some legal, er, "technicalities" over some matter-of-fact things about Sideburns?

* * *

BRILLIANT legal minds already argued that Sideburns was NOT a Filipino because of some quirks in our 1936 Constitution.

Well, maybe that's why we replaced it with something better, but that is beside the point.

The point is, the *masa* on the side of Sideburns is not bound to get all the legal niceties in a Supreme Court "TKO" of Sideburns.

You see, here is a person who, all along, we, meaning, this whole country, without any exception whatsoever, accepted as a true blooded Filipino, and more.

I mean, we make him do all sorts of things which a good Filipino does. We give him awards and citation, sometimes even coming from the government itself.

We let him pay all sorts of heavy taxes. He even invests all his hard-earned money in this country. Because we want his money, we allow him to own properties.

Good God, the guy does a lot more than what most Filipinos, be they politicians or be they businessmen, do for this country.

But, all of a sudden, he is no longer a Filipino. Why is that? Because, unfortunately for him, he is running for president.

Really, how do you make the stupid uneducated *masa* favor some bookish legal technicalities over those living breathing facts? Beats me too!

* * *

THUS the fight for public opinion boils down to technicalities and practicalities, and in this case, we all know what always wins.

One side is something up there in the clouds, about some legal thinking written on paper a long time ago. Theories are always hard to comprehend.

The other side of it all is a real live person, and the way he lives his life, following the law, helping his fellow men, believing in this country.

Technical things, whether the legal or the economic kind, are always hard to understand. For instance, this cute administration crows about the GDP growth.

But down here in my barangay, what we know is, there are a lot of jobless people, their families going hungry, their kids out of school, or maybe even sleeping on the sidewalk on some refrigerator carton boxes.

* * *

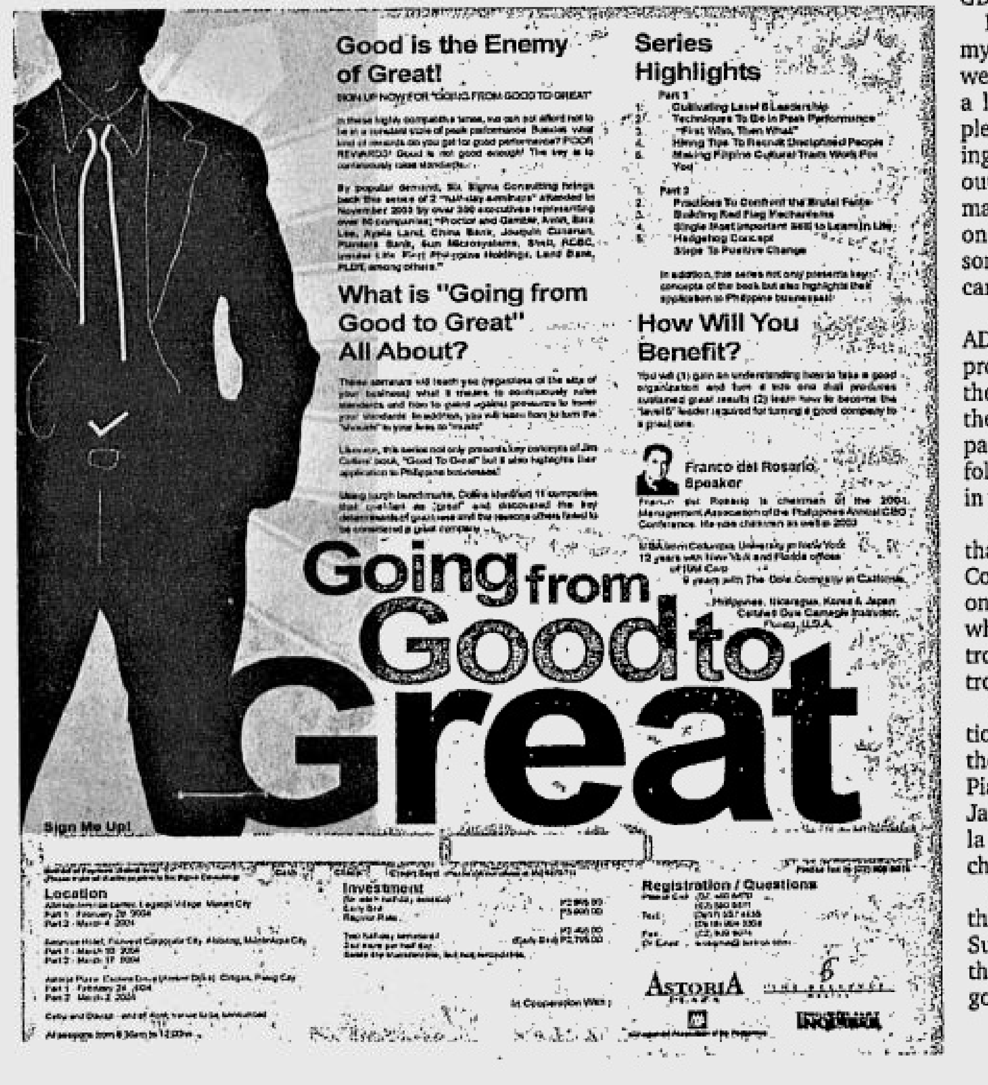
ADDING to that problem, of course, is the track record of the body which will pass judgment of the folk hero—whether in reel or in real life.

Everybody knows that the Supreme Court has been ruling on cases after cases which elicited controversies after controversies.

You have the election automation, or the so-called ACM, or Piatco, or Amari, or Jancom, or the Manila Hotel, or the petrochemical plant, etc.

In private, even the supporters of the Supreme Court say that it has probably gone overboard.

BREAKTIME/ B4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ODA disbursement up 39%

By Michelle V. Remo

THE GOVERMENT'S disbursement of official development assistance (ODA) last year increased by 38.9 percent from year-ago level, indicating an improvement in the level of efficiency in the utilization of ODAs.

The National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) reported yesterday that ODA disbursement last year reached $1.438 billion, compared with the $1.035-billion disbursement in 2002.

"The last time the government came close to this performance level was in 1996, when disbursements reached $1.39 billion," said Neda Director General Romulo Neri.

Of the total ODA disbursement last year, the government was able to utilize $1.1 billion worth of project loans, or 14 percent higher than the $935 million used in 2002. It also disbursed $338 million worth of program loans, which was higher than the $100 million used in 2002.

Neri, who is also the economic planning secretary, said the improvement in the disbursement of program loans was partly attributed to the "substantial compliance" of the government with the requirements of ODA-funded environmental projects.

He was referring to the Metro Manila Air Quality Improvement program and the Pasig River Environmental Management Program and Rehabilitation Sector Program. The former was financed by loans from the Asian Development Bank and the Japan Bank for International Cooperation, while the latter was financed by the ADB alone.

The Neda report said project loans from JBIC accounted for 62 percent of the total ODA disbursement last year. JBIC is the country's biggest source of ODA.

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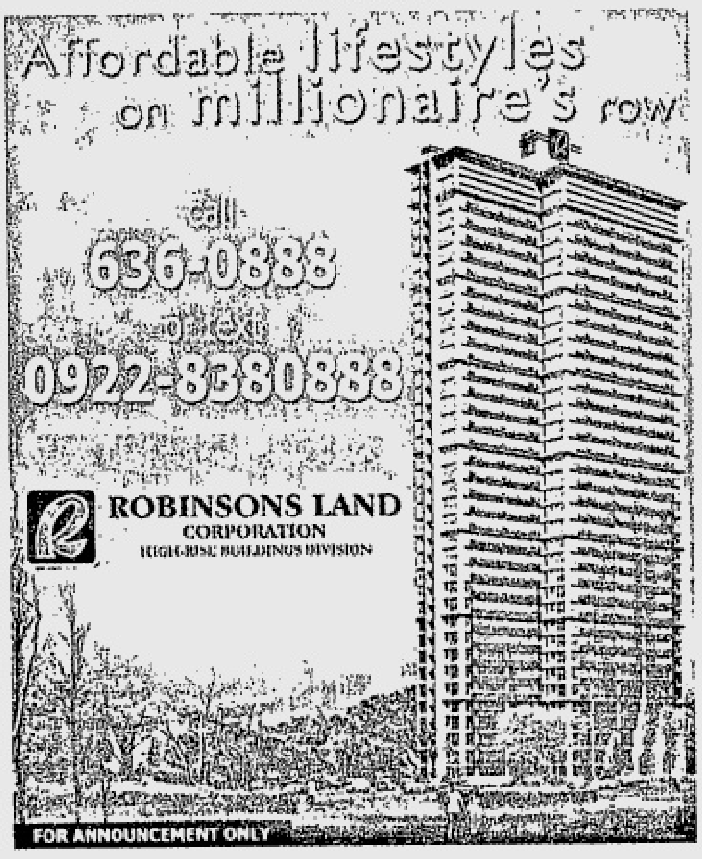
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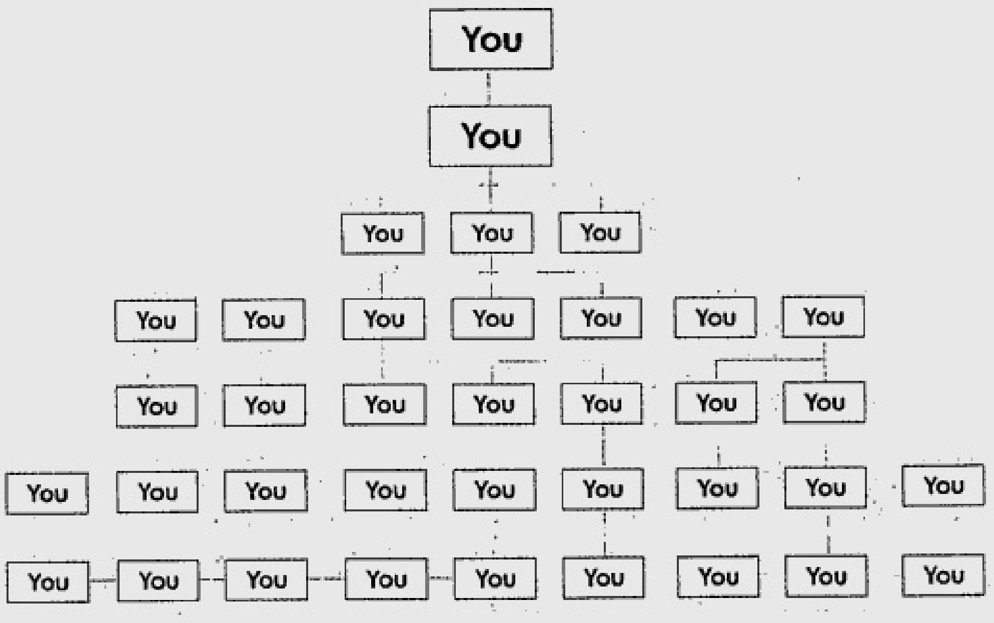
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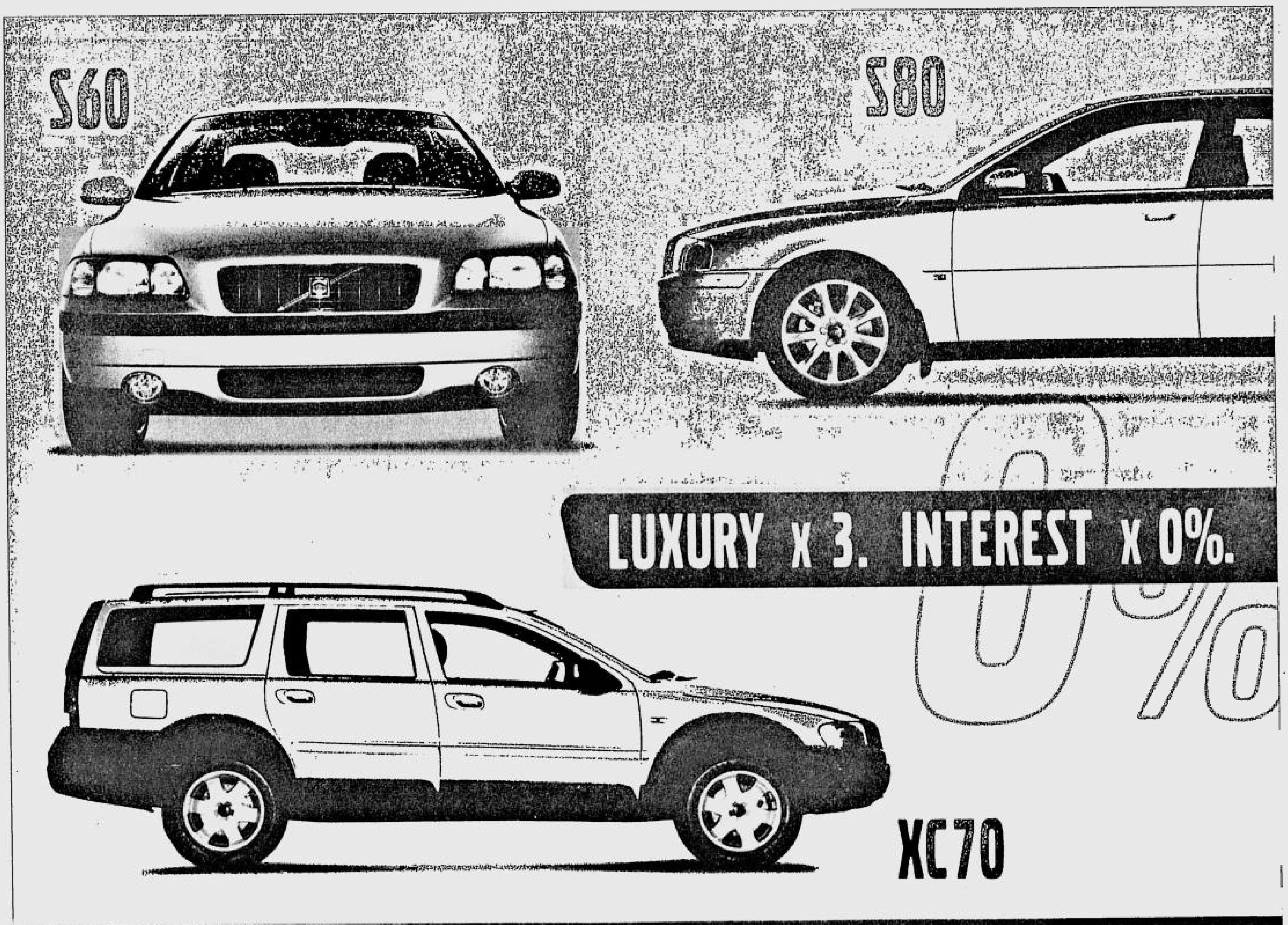

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PTT to invest ₱2B-₱3B in RP

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THAILAND's biggest oil and gas firm, PTT Pcl, is investing between P2 billion and P3 billion over the next five years in the construction of 100 more gasoline stations in the Philippines. This is in line with PTT's increasing business interests in the country.

PTT president Prasert Boonsamphan made the announcement yesterday in Malacañang before the signing of an energy cooperation agreement between his company and the Philippine National Oil Corp.

The agreement seeks to further strengthen the two countries' ties in oil supply security, oil exploration and alternative fuels.

Boonsamphan said the PTT changed its mind about folding up its Philippine operations after its reassessment of the country's prospects showed a good potential for the economy and the oil distribution business.

PTT has established 40 stations nationwide since the oil industry was deregulated and opened to new players in 1998.

PTT and other new players, however, hardly made a dent in the industry, accounting for less than a 10-percent share of the market dominated by Petron Corp., Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. and Caltex Philippines Inc.

Aside from retail expansion, Boonsamphan said PTT was looking to sell motor lubricant oil in the country.

In the memorandum of understanding signed yesterday, PTT agreed to study and explore areas of cooperation with PNOC, specifically in the use of existing oil storage facilities in the country such as the one in Subic.

Energy Secretary Vincent Perez Jr. said this was part of the earlier cooperation agreement between the Philippines and Thailand, which was signed during the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation summit.

The agreement calls for the establishment of giant storage facilities in their respective countries that would challenge Singapore's dominance as Southeast Asia's regional energy trading hub.

Under the deal, the two countries could share oil storage facilities and provide emergency oil supplies to each other, if needed.

Perez said PTT was also interested in providing gas pipelines to deliver natural gas from Palawan to the transport, commercial and household sectors.

In oil exploration, Perez said that while PTT was keen on hunting for oil in the country, PNOC was interested in getting geothermal drilling and contracting projects in Thailand.

Perez said PTT has also proposed to help PNOC develop alternative fuel such as coco diesel, alcogas and renewable fuel sources.

Heinz UFC exec named ABS-CBN president

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

LUIS Alejandro

TELEVISION giant ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp. named marketing veteran Luis F. Alejandro as its new president and chief operating officer starting May.

This concludes the search for the top post after former president Federico M. Garcia announced his retirement last December.

Alejandro is the chief operating officer of condiments manufacturer Heinz UFC Philippines Inc. and concurrent president and chief operating officer of Southeast Asia Food Inc. (SAFI).

He is backed by 24 years in marketing operations and general management experience, starting his career at consumer goods company Proctor & Gamble.

Alejandro also joined Kraft Foods Philippines Inc. in 1995 as president and general manager and hails from Ateneo de Manila University, earning a degree in economics. He also finished his masters degree in business man-

HEINZ/ B8

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BSP to push merger of ATM groups

By Doris C. Dumlao

BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Rafael Buenaventura vowed to push for the consolidation of the country's three automated teller machine (ATM) networks before his term expires in mid-2005.

"I hope that someday the three ATM networks would merge into one, thus increasing efficiency and savings," Buenaventura said during the launch of HSBC's 2004 Guide to Treasury Management in Asia-Pacific held Tuesday night.

The three ATM networks in the Philippines are BancNet, Megalink and ExpressNet.

He said he would try to make this three-way merger a reality before he steps down as BSP chief.

A BSP governor's term ends one year after a new president assumes office.

Although some of these ATM networks are interconnected, clients from other networks are charged higher fees.

Electronic banking debuted in the country in the 1980s with the introduction of ATMs. Today, ATMs are widespread, totaling 4,395 units as of June 30, 2003, of which 28 percent are outside bank premises.

"It's safe to say that ATMs now form a major part of our normal banking routine especially in more urbanized areas and are integral to banks' customer delivery channels," Buenaventura said.

He said banks continued to expand their ATM networks to enhance customer convenience and at the same time lower transaction costs for both the customer and the bank.

The BSP chief also noted that other e-banking innovations emerged like phone banking, Internet banking and mobile banking.

BSP gets grant to implement key reforms

By Michelle V. Remo

THE ASIA Europe Meeting (Asem), a group of 11 countries plus the European Commission, granted the government $480,000 to bankroll the implementation of reforms in the country's financial sector.

The grant, which will be administered by the World Bank, shall be used by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas to strengthen its monitoring and supervisory functions and ensure the banks' compliance with the country's banking laws.

Strengthening these functions will involve developing the BSP's information system and enhancing the supervisory skills of BSP staff.

"The Philippine banking system weathered the regional financial crisis of the late 1990s relatively well and avoided major failures of financial institutions and a systemic crisis," said World Bank country director Van Pulley during the signing of the grant held at the Department of Finance Tuesday.

Pulley, however, said that a number of reforms are still needed to fully develop the Philippine financial sector.

These include protecting bank regulators from litigation, assisting distressed banks and implementing the Anti-Money Laundering law.

"The effective supervision of the country's banking sector is essential for the stability and development of a strong and resilient financial system," Pulley said.

Breaktime

From page B2

That, sadly, is the image of the Supreme Court today, and the point is, there are people who think it is capable of giving them a lot of bull.

Sure, nothing may cow the Supreme Court, not the supporters of Sideburns, not business, not anybody.

But it is not enjoying that much public respect either. Bad news indeed!

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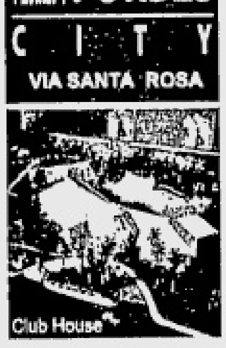

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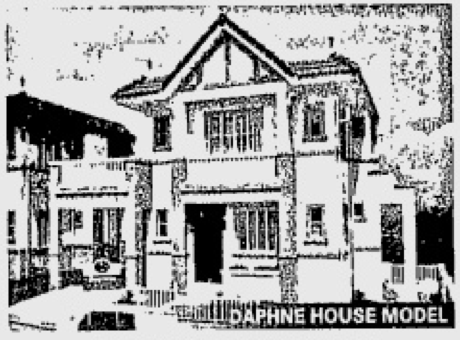

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PUBLIC NOTICES

ANNOUNCEMENT

This public announcement indicates that the International Finance Corporation, acting as the administrator of the Environmental Opportunities Facility intends to invest in Waterhealth International. Please see the Environment Review Summary posted at 21-B Rufino Pacific Tower, 6784 Ayala Avenue, Makati City, Philippines 1223.

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late CLAUDIA L. ORCA has been extrajudicially settled by and among the heirs in a document dated January 26, 2004 and sworn to before Notary Public Atty. Edson P. Bruce of Binangonan Rizal as per Doc No. 78; Page No. 16; Book No. VII; Series of 2004.
(PDI-Feb 12, 19 & 26, 2004)

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late DANTE P. TURINGAN was extrajudicially settled with self adjudication by his sole heir HELEN A. TURINGAN as per Doc. No. 126; Page No. 27; Book No. 5; Series of 2004 before Notary Public Atty. Teodoro Hernandez of Manila
PDI-Feb 19, 26 & Mar 4, 2004

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE AND DEVELOPMENT
Bids & Awards Committee

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

COMMUNITY PROCUREMENT SPECIALIST
KALAHI-CIDSS PROJECT

The Government of the Philippines has received a loan from the International Bank or Reconstruction and Development toward the cost of the Kapit-Bisig Laban Sa Kahirapan-Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery Of Social Services Project (KALAHI-CIDSS), and intends to apply part of the proceeds of this loan to payment of professional services under this Contract.

The Department of Social Welfare and Development which is the lead implementing agency for this flagship project of the government in fighting poverty now invites Individual Proponents for the hiring of

Community Procurement Specialist

The Consultant shall provide technical assistance in community procurement system of the KALAHI-CIDSS communities. Technical assistance shall include specialized advice to implementers, finalization of procurement manual, development of guidelines and instructional implementors' reference materials on community procurement, training implementers and staff of LGU partners, report preparation, monitoring and assessment of technical capacity and implementation of community procurement in the field.

The Consultant should meet the following qualifications:

- Graduate of a college degree preferably in Business Administration or Engineering
- Has at least five (5) years experience in government work especially in procurement within WB projects
- Familiar with government rules and procedures in bidding including those prescribed by Local Government Code
- Able to conduct procurement orientation sessions for other project staff
- Able to implement procurement systems and recommend improvements

Interested Applicants may submit their Application Letters and Comprehensive Resumé to the Bids & Awards Committee Secretariat at 2nd floor, DSWD, Batasan Pambansa Complex, Constitution Hills, Quezon City with telephone numbers: 951-71-16 until March 4, 2004 at 5:00 p.m. Terms of Reference can be downloaded from the DBM-EPS website.

(Sgd.) **RHODA F. YAP**
Assistant Secretary and Chairperson,
Bids & Awards Committee

(PDI–Feb. 19 & 26, 2004)

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PUBLIC NOTICES

AUCTION SALE

MEYCAUAYAN-FILIPINAS
Pawnshop, Aliw Complex, Calvario, Meyc. Bulacan. All unredeemed pledges of Aug. 2003 will be auctioned on Feb. 24, 8:30 am. Lanuza & Sons-Auctioneer.
(PDI-February 19, 2004)

MUNOZ-FILIPINAS
Pawnshop, Roosevelt Ave, Katipunan, Diliman, Quezon City. All unredeemed pledges of Sept. 2003 will be auctioned on Feb 24, 3:00pm. Lanuza & Sons-Auctioneer
(PDI- February 19, 2004)

NOTICE OF LOSS

Notice of Loss that S2 # under the name of Dr. Gina Alberto Manawat with expiry date Dec. 2001 was lost last Sept. 5, 2003.

S2 License No. 468282 of Dr. PAUL V. LEE was lost.
(PDI- Feb. 19, 2004)

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Rehab medicine group marks 30th year

THE PHILIPPINE Academy of Rehabilitation Medicine (PARM) will mark its 30th year by holding its 14th Annual Convention, February 18-20 at Alicia Hotel in Legaspi City.

With its theme "PM & R at 30 and Beyond..." the convention boasts of foreign and local speakers who will provide, through interactive sessions and symposia, practical and relevant inputs regarding rehabilitative measures that will enhance the disabled's quality of life from birth to geriatric age.

PARM was established in 1973 to increase awareness, provide preventive measures and deliver optimum rehabilitative care to the disabled sector of society. Interested parties may contact Lei or Egay at (632) 415-9048.

National Power Corporation

MMSD-2004-02____
February 02, 2004

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Materials Management Services Division (MMSD), Materials Management Department (MMD), National Power Corporation invites all parties interested to apply for eligibility and to bid for the service Contracts listed below.

LOGMMSD2004-0001: SUPPLY OF LABOR, TOOLS/EQUIPMENT, SUPPLIES/MATERIALS AND SUPERVISION FOR THE MANPOWER REQUIREMENT OF NATIONAL POWER CORPORATION OFFICES, PLANTS AND OTHER INSTALLATIONS RELATED TO JANITORIAL, LAWN AND GARDEN/LANDSCAPING, SKILLED, SEMI-SKILLED AND OTHER ALLIED SERVICES.

SCHEDULE NO.	FG	NPC OFFICES / PLANTS/ INSTALLATIONS	AREA/LOCATION	NO. OF MAN POWER	SUBTOTAL COST ESTIMATE PER INSTALLATION LABOR AND MATERIALS
I	HRAF	FMD: NPC Building 1	Diliman, Quezon City	31	9,870,321.29
II	HRAF	FOM: NPC-Head Office Complex	Diliman, Quezon City	18	4,725,117.99
III	TMS	ADP: Navotas-II Gas Turbine PP	Navotas, Metro Manila	7	2,210,387.39
		ERSD Warehouse/Stockyard	San Jose, Substation, Bulacan	2	671,493.24
	SPUG	SPUG Office/Stockyard	Minuyan, SJDM, Bulacan	11	2,800,827.94
	IPP	Navotas II Storage Tank Facilities	Navotas, Metro Manila	2	704,432.10
	GEN	Angat Watershed Team	Norzagaray, Bulacan	3	622,530.26
	HRAF	FMD: Italian Village	Angat, Bulacan	2	415,020.17
	LOG	Mexico Central Stockyard	Mexico, Pampanga	15	3,304,945.34
		TOTAL		42	10,729,636.44
IV	HRAF	FMD: NPC Old Building	Port Area, Manila	20	7,092,244.67
		TTD: Training Fac. Ext.	Sucat, Parañaque City	2	801,042.26
	LOG	MMD: NPC Warehouse	Port Area, Manila	3	1,627,626.70
	TMS	EMD Laboratory	Port Area, Manila	1	342,777.87
		Manila Thermal PP	Ermita, Manila	15	4,493,404.31
		MRMD/MEC Fab-Shop	Buli, Muntinlupa City	7	2,449,333.33
		Island Grid Project Off.	Sucat, Parañaque City	2	757,511.29
		Tiwi-Makban Rehab Project Off.	Sucat, Parañaque City	2	502,430.85
	S&S	Satellite Office	Sucat, Parañaque City	1	320,196.21
		TOTAL		53	18,386,567.50
V	HRAF	FMD: NPC Resort Village	Bagac, Bataan	42	9,525,700.68
		FMD: NPC Training Ctr.	Bagac, Bataan	12	3,065,891.41
		FMD: Eman Beach Resort	Morong, Bataan	3	612,432.18
	TMS	EMD Laboratories	Bagac, Bataan	4	939,256.51
		TOTAL		61	14,143,280.78
VI	HRAF	BTPP Preservation Project	Limay, Bataan	14	3,237,850.05
		Bataan Gas Turbine Plt	Limay, Bataan	3	764,661.69
		FMD: BTPP Housing Cpd.	Limay, Bataan	5	1,020,720.31
	IPP	Bataan Comb. Cycle PP	Limay, Bataan	13	3,078,841.61
		TOTAL		35	8,102,073.65
VII	GEN	Magat Hydroelectric Plant	Magat, Isabela	38	7,542,486.72
		Magat Watershed Team	Magat, Isabela	2	337,654.28
		Pantabangan Watershed Area Team	Pantabangan, Nueva Ecija	2	408,266.84
		TOTAL		42	8,288,407.84
VIII	GEN	Masinloc Coal Fired TPP	Masinloc, Zambales	71	17,109,600.00
IX	TMS	Luzon Gen. Project	San Roque, Pangasinan	6	2,116,623.30
			Binalonan, Pangasinan	2	345,094.57
			Casiguran, Aurora	1	166,302.63
	GEN	Watershed Area Team	San Roque, Pangasinan	1	366,131.22
		Flood Forecasting (FFWSDO)	San Roque, Pangasinan	1	329,287.14
		Upper Agno Watershed Area Team	Ambuklao, Bokod, Benguet	2	332,851.99
	SPUG	Basco Diesel PP	Basco, Batanes	1	777,870.38
		Sabtang Diesel PP	Sabtang, Batanes	1	1,547,800.71
		Itbayat Diesel PP	Itbayat, Batanes	1	1,547,800.71
		Calayan Diesel PP	Calayan, Cagayan	1	309,099.26
		Palanan (Isabela) Diesel PP	Palanan, Isabela	1	319,876.27
		Casiguran (Aurora) Diesel PP	Casiguran, Aurora	1	409,923.65
		Lubuagan Diesel PP	Lubuagan, Kalinga	1	256,165.61
		Kabugao Diesel PP	Kabugao, Apayao	1	374,678.55
	S&S	Satellite Office	Baguio City	2	364,545.50
		TOTAL		23	9,768,061.48
X	TMS	PMD-CBK Project	Kalayaan, Laguna	2	500,943.80
		APD: Malaya GT Plant	Pililla, Rizal	3	736,279.18
	IPP	Malaya LFO Tank Farms	Pililla, Rizal	3	752,315.37
	GEN	Caliraya Watershed	Kalayaan, Laguna	8	1,555,588.64
	LOG	Kalayaan Warehouse	Kalayaan, Laguna	12	3,802,635.72
	HRAF	FMD: Camarin, Guesthouse	Cavinti, Laguna	7	2,892,142.49
		FMD: Japanese Garden	Cavinti, Laguna	12	2,333,379.95
		FMD: Caliraya Housing Compound	Lumban, Laguna	1	194,448.33
		FMD: Bolocan Guesthouse	Majayjay, Laguna	1	194,448.33
		FMD: Puerto Azul Guesthouse	Ternate, Cavite	1	200,357.26
		TOTAL		50	13,162,537.07
XI	GEN	12,558Mak-Ban GPP	Bitin, Bay, Laguna	56	12,558,524.32
		Makban Watershed Area Team	Limao, Calauan, Laguna	3	583,344.99
	TMS	APD: Pinamucan DPP	Pinamucan, Batangas	10	2,204,594.67
		Tiwi-Makban Rehab Proj.	Bitin, Laguna	1	194,448.33
	SPUG	Tingloy Diesel PP	Tingloy, Batangas	1	993,671.80
	IPP	Ilijan Gas Serving Facility	Ilijan, Batangas	2	528,626.93
		TOTAL		73	17,063,611.03
XII	GEN	Tiwi Geothermal Power Plant	Tiwi, Albay	55	8,396,958.29
		Tiwi Watershed Team	Tiwi, Albay	3	466,033.89
	TMS	Tiwi-Makban Rehab Proj	Tiwi, Albay	1	155,344.63
		TOTAL		59	9,018,336.82
XIII	TMS	Palawan Backbone Project	Pto. Princesa, Palawan	4	1,109,665.52
	SPUG	Polillo Diesel PP	Polillo, Quezon	1	405,866.46
		Jomalig Diesel PP	Jomalig, Quezon	1	323,197.19
		Patnanungan Diesel PP	Patnanungan, Quezon	1	399,589.57
		OM Cam Operatns. Divisions	Daraga, Albay	2	689,391.47
		Batan Diesel PP	Batan, Albay	1	958,740.04
		Rapu-rapu Diesel PP	Rapu-rapu Island, Albay	1	1,571,590.75
		Viga Diesel PP	Viga, Catanduanes	1	933,182.33
		Power Barge 110	Bato, Catanduanes	2	1,318,140.80
		OM-Palawan Area	Puerto Princesa, Palawan	1	468,033.55
		Puerto Princesa DPP	Puerto Princesa, Palawan	2	1,740,966.01
		Brooke's Point Substation	Brks. Pt., Palawan	1	1,574,665.40
		El Nido Diesel PP	El Nido, Palawan	1	1,574,665.40
		Roxas Diesel PP	Roxas, Palawan	1	1,574,665.40
		Taytay Diesel PP	Taytay, Palawan	1	1,574,665.40
		Cuyo Diesel PP	Cuyo, Palawan	2	829,448.60
		Cagayancillo Diesel PP	Cagayan, Palawan	1	564,059.24
		Busuanga Diesel PP	Coron, Busuanga	2	854,218.20
		Culion Diesel PP	Culion, Palawan	1	1,574,665.40
		Balabac Diesel PP	Balabac, Palawan	1	1,574,665.40
		San Vicente Diesel PP	San Vicente, Palawan	1	1,574,665.40
		Linapacan Diesel PP	Linapacan, Palawan	1	1,574,665.40
		Agutaya Diesel PP	Agutaya, Palawan	1	1,574,665.40
		Araceli Diesel PP	Araceli, Palawan	1	1,574,665.40
		Power Barge 106	Pto. Prin., Palawan	3	949,551.31
	LOG	Ligao Warehouse & Stockyard	Ligao, Albay	6	1,011,267.47
		TOTAL		41	29,735,468.63
XIV	SPUG	OM-Mindoro/Romblon Area	Calapan, Mindoro Oriental	3	787,629.75
		Pulang Lupa DPP	San Jose, Mindoro Occ.	2	598,694.63
		Mamburao Diesel PP	Mamburao, Mindoro Occ.	2	574,422.94
		Lubang Diesel PP	Lubang, Mindoro Occ.	2	354,735.20
		Boac Diesel PP	Boac, Marinduque	3	2,863,548.89
		Torrijos Diesel PP	Torrijos, Marinduque	1	273,788.62
		Power Barge 120	Magpog, Marinduque	4	2,330,354.13
		Masbate Diesel PP	Mobo, Masbate	2	332,819.21
		Ticao Diesel PP	Ticao, Masbate	1	391,459.00
		Power Barge 105	Masbate Pier, Masbate	4	826,952.19
		Tablas Diesel PP	Tablas, Romblon	2	340,640.35
		Romblon, Diesel PP	Romblon, Romblon	2	340,649.35
		Sibuyan Diesel PP	Sibuyan, Romblon	1	399,874.06
		Corcuera Diesel PP	Corcuera, Romblon	1	399,874.06
		Banton Diesel PP	Banton, Romblon	1	399,874.06
		San Jose Diesel PP	San Jose, Romblon	1	399,874.06
		Concepcion Diesel PP	Concepcion, Romblon	1	399,874.06
		Power Barge 114	Romblon Pier, Romblon	1	369,333.36
		Power Barge 109	Tablas Island, Romblon	1	369,333.36
	GEN	Power Barge 102	Puerto Galera, Min. Occ.	6	1,646,315.74
		TOTAL		41	14,728,066.30
XV	GEN	Bac-Man GPP	Bacon, Sorsogon	41	7,777,780.42
	TMS	Luzon Gen. Project	Sorsogon	1	155,344.63
		TOTAL		42	7,933,125.05
XVI	GEN	Leyte Geothermal PP	Tongonan, Leyte	30	9,403,490.29
	SPUG	Limasawa Diesel PP	Limasawa, Leyte	1	326,648.12
		TOTAL		31	9,730,138.41
XVII	GEN	Panay Diesel Power Plant	Dingle, Ilo-Ilo	15	3,933,556.60
		Power Barge 103	Estancia, Ilo-Ilo	6	1,669,503.14
		Power Barge 104	La Paz, Ilo-Ilo	6	1,548,165.40
	TMS	PMD: Dingle DP-II	Dingle, Ilo-Ilo	2	507,427.78
	SPUG	Power Plant	Gigantes, Ilo-Ilo	1	423,635.13
		TOTAL		30	8,082,288.05
XVIII	SPUG	Camotes Diesel PP	Camotes, Cebu	2	386,335.41
		Bantayan Diesel PP	Bantayan, Cebu	2	842,912.72
		Pilar Diesel PP	Pilar, Cebu	1	386,872.30
		Doong Diesel PP	Doong, Cebu	1	342,114.88
		Guintarcan Diesel PP	Guintarcan, Cebu	1	251,283.41
		Power Barge 118	Madridejos, Cebu	2	487,598.38
		Biri Diesel PP	Biri, Samar	1	281,822.40
		Capul Diesel PP	Capul, Samar	1	288,113.69
		San Antonio Diesel PP	San Antonio, Samar	1	492,047.51
		Sto. Niño Diesel PP	Santo Niño, Samar	1	269,289.08
		San Vicente Diesel PP	San Vicente, Samar	1	297,193.15
		Tagapul-an Diesel PP	Tagapul-an, Samar	1	292,565.47
		Almagro Diesel PP	Almagro, Samar	1	210,302.58
		Zumaraga Diesel PP	Zumaraga, Samar	1	350,887.52
		Caluya (Antique) Diesel PP	Caluya, Antique	1	413,899.81
		Maripipi Diesel PP	Maripipi, Biliran	1	336,809.08
		Siquijor Diesel PP	Candanay, Siquijor	2	786,732.48
		Power Barge 113	Lazi, Siquijor	2	761,853.00
		Visayas Oprns. Dept.	Cebu City	3	645,413.46
		Visayas Oprns. Dept.	Naga, Cebu	4	863,786.00
	TMS	APD: Cebu Diesel PP	Toledo City, Cebu	19	3,571,089.75
	IPP	Visayas Office	Cebu City	1	437,626.38
	S&S	Satellite Office	Cebu City	1	222,639.23
	GEN	Thermal Gen. OVP Office	Cebu City	2	363,606.07
		TOTAL		53	13,265,294.81
XIX	GEN	Bohol Diesel PP	Tagbilaran City, Bohol	15	3,404,131.45
		Loboc HE Plant	Loboc, Bohol	6	1,624,439.76
		Power Barge 101	Maribojoc, Bohol	6	1,179,784.13
		TOTAL		27	6,208,355.33
XX	GEN	Palimpinon Geothermal PP	Valencia, Negros Oriental	29	6,162,646.57
		Amlan HE Plant	Amlan, Negros Oriental	6	2,193,783.39
		TOTAL		35	8,356,429.96
XXI	GEN	Batangas Coal Fired TPP	Calaca, Batangas	68	17,650,060.97
					P 256,535,919.30

Application for eligibility and to bid is open to all janitorial and manpower agencies who met the following criteria:

1) a. Duly licensed Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships;
   b. Partnerships duly organized under the laws of the Philippines and of which at least sixty percent (60%) of the interest belongs to citizens of the Philippines;
   c. Corporations duly organized under the laws of the Philippines, and of which at least sixty percent (60%) of the outstanding capital stock belongs to citizens of the Philippines;
   d. Entities forming themselves into a joint venture that intend to be jointly and severally responsible or liable for a particular contract: *Provided, however*, that Filipino ownership or interest of the joint venture concerned shall be at least sixty percent (60%), or
   e. Cooperatives duly registered with the Cooperatives Development Authority (CDA).
   f. Actively registered with the SEC and or DTI.
   g. Has been operating for at least two (2) years.
   h. Have no record of unsatisfactory performance or disqualification to participate public bidding with NPC or in any kind of Contract with Philippine Government.
2) The value of the prospective bidders largest single contract similar to the contract to be bid must be at least 50% of the Approved Budget for the Contract to be Bid (ABC).
3) The prospective bidder must present a commitment from a licensed bank to extend a credit line if awarded the contract to be bid, or cash deposit certificate in an amount not lower than 10% of the ABC to be bid, or must have a Net Financial Contracting Capacity (NFCC) at least equal to the ABC to be bid.
4) Must have no pending administrative case for violation of the SSS and minimum wage laws, rules and regulation.

Contract duration is for two (2) years unless sooner terminated Sourcing of Funding is thru Internal Cash Generation. Only bids within the Approved Budget for Contract to be bid shall be accepted.

Eligibility and bid documents will be available for issuance from **February 13 to February 23, 2004**, 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. at Materials Management Services Division (MMSD) - Materials Management Department (MMD) Bldg. 1, National Power Corporation, cor. BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City, upon submission and presentation of original document of SEC/DTI/CDA registration and payment of non-refundable fee of One Thousand Pesos Only (P1,000.00) per schedule.

Deadline for submission of duly accomplished Application for eligibility and bid documents, forms and statements shall be on **March 8, 2004** at 10:00 a.m., Morones Function Room. If the date is declared a non-working day, the deadline for submission shall be moved to the next working day immediately following said date. Late submission and/or incomplete application shall not be accepted. A pre-bid conference shall be conducted on **February 24, 2004**, 2:00 p.m. at Kañao Function Room.

Single Stage Bidding with post qualification, under R.A. 9184 shall be applied for this project.

NPC reserves the right to reject any or all bids at any time prior to award of contract, waive any defects therein, and accept the offer most advantageous to the Corporation, without thereby incurring any of the following: a) liability to offset expenses or losses the bidder may incur in the preparation of the bids; and b) obligation to inform the affected bidder or bidders of the grounds for the basis of the BAC's action.

(Sgd.) **LORENZO S. MARCELO**
Chairman
Bids and Awards Committee, MMSD-NPC

(PDI - Feb. 12 & 19, 2004)

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Finance
BUREAU OF CUSTOMS
Collection District II-B

MANILA INTERNATIONAL CONTAINER PORT

NOTICE OF OVERSTAYING SHIPMENTS AND THE PUBLIC AUCTION THEREOF

WHEREAS, the herein described items/goods were separately imported on various dates at the Manila International Container Port, which up to the present, no Customs Import Entry has been thereon, or if such Entry has been filed thereon, there was no further claim/adjudication was made thereto by their respective consignee/importer or such rightful claimant within the period prescribed by law, to wit:

LOCATION: 8R FLANDERS

ARRIVAL	REG. NO.	CONSIGNEE	DESCRIPTION
8-8-03	TMS-030	Florence Food Corp.	Eskinol Face
1-22-03	CLI-002	E. Bros. & Co.	Spark Plug
4-29-03	SKI-023	Sonny T. Dee	Blank CDR
9-16-03	RCN-085	Mitsuba Mfg.	Copper Wire
8-12-03	CLI-027	Deutsche	Windows and Door
12-2002	TMS-028	Florence Food Corp.	Halo-Halo Mix
7-18-02	TMS-028	Prof. J. Masangkay	Microscope Parts

WHEREAS, the failure of the Cosignee/Importer and such other rightful claimant to claim/adjudicate his/her importation, shall be deemed to be a renunciation of all his/her interest and property rights, in favor of the Government, pursuant to Section 1801 of the Tariff and Customs Code of The Philippines, as amended by Republic Act 7651, and be auctioned after ten (10) days from the date of posting/advertisement.

SO ORDERED.

Manila International Container Port, Manila, Philippines, this 17th day of February 2004.

(Sgd.) **ATTY. REYNALDO S. NICOLAS**
District Collector of Customs

(PDI – February 19, 2004)

National Power Corporation
GEOTHERMAL GENERATION
BAC-MAN GEOTHERMAL POWER PLANT COMPLEX

INVITATION TO BID

INTERESTED PARTIES/SUPPLIERS ARE INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PUBLIC BIDDING TO BE CONDUCTED ON MARCH 10, 2004 FOR THE FOLLOWING:

1. **PR#3BAC-04-0091** - SUPPLY OF LABOR AND MATERIALS FOR THE REWINDING/ RECONDITIONING AND REHABILITATION OF HOTWELL PUMP MOTOR
   ESTIMATED COST: P1,785,000.00
2. **PR#3BAC-04-0020 /PB-04-0122** - AUTO-TITRATOR, Titroline Alpha Plus
   ESTIMATED COST: P907,500.00
3. **PR#3BAC-04-0103 /PB-04-0118** - BALL VALVE, 3/4" WOG T316 ASTM & 7 Others
   ESTIMATED COST: P967,500.00

PRE-BID CONFERENCE : MARCH 01, 2004/BMGPPC CONFERENCE ROOM / 2:00 P.M.
BIDDING DATE : MARCH 10, 2004 / BMGPPC CONFERENCE ROOM / 2:00 P.M.

COPIES OF BID DOCUMENTS MAY BE OBTAINED FROM PROCUREMENT SERVICES ADMINISTRATIVE SECTION, GROUND FLOOR, BAC-MAN GEOTHERMAL POWER PLANT COMPLEX AND MUST BE SUBMITTED ON OR BEFORE MARCH 10, 2004, 2:00 P.M.

ALL BIDS MUST BE ACCOMPANIED WITH BIDDER'S BOND IN THE FOLLOWING FORMS:

- CASH, MANAGER'S OR CASHIER'S CHECK -- ONE (1)% OF THE ESTIMATED PRICE.
- 2.5% OF THE ESTIMATED PRICE ISSUED BY THE GSIS OR ANY REPUTABLE SURETY.
- 1 1/2% BANK GUARANTEE CONFIRMED/AUTHENTICATED BY A REPUTABLE BANK

ALL INTERESTED BIDDERS MUST SUBMIT PRE-QUALIFICATION DOCUMENTS ON OR BEFORE FEBRUARY 23, 2004.

(Sgd.) **ROLANDO E. CAWALING**
BAC CHAIRMAN

(PDI - Feb. 16, 19, 25 & 27, 2004)

REPUBLIKA NG PILIPINAS
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
KAGAWARAN NG EDUKASYON
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
DepEd Complex, Meralco Avenue,
Pasig City, Philippines

Tanggapan ng Pangalawang Kalihim
Office of the Undersecretary

DepED

Telefax 631-98-40
Direct Line 633-53-42
Trunk Line 632-13-61 local 2221 2007
E-Mail Address usbul@deped.gov.ph
Website http://www.deped.gov.ph

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
BEE 04-02-13

The Department of Education through the Bureau of Elementary Education is inviting all suppliers to apply for eligibility and to bid for the Printing and Delivery of 50,000 copies of Preschool Education Handbook for Teachers, 100,000 copies of Readiness Skills Workbook and 100,000 sets of RSW Answer Sheets. The Approved budget for the printing and delivery shall be P8,000,000.00.

All interested suppliers may avail of the bidding documents upon submission of a Letter of Intent and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Three Hundred Pesos (P300.00) starting February 19 – March 5, 2004 at the BAC Secretariat Office, Rm. 112-A, Mabini Bldg., DepEd Complex, Pasig City or visit the DepEd Website at http@www.dep.gov.ph.

A pre-bid conference will be held on March 1, 2004, 10:00 AM at Bulwagan ng Karunungan, Rizal Bldg. I, DepEd Complex, Pasig City. The deadline for the submission and opening of bids shall be on March 15, 2004 at the same time and place mentioned above.

DepEd-BAC reserves the right to reject any or all bids to waive deficiencies embodied therein without assuming any obligation whatsoever to offset expenses or losses the bidder may incur in the preparation of the bids. DepEd-BAC further reserves the right to declare a failure of bid, or not award the contract, and makes no assurance that a contract shall be entered into as a result of this invitation.

(Sgd.) **JUAN MIGUEL M. LUZ**
Undersecretary
Chairman, DepEd-BAC

(PDI – February 19 & 26, 2004)

Republic of the Philippines
Province of Pangasinan
MUNICIPALITY OF BOLINAO

OFFICE OF THE BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
NOTICE OF PROCUREMENT

Notice is hereby given that the Local Government of Bolinao, Pangasinan, Philippines is to procure a Landing Barge to service the Santiago Island-Mainland Bolinao ferry points with the following minimum ship particulars: **Gross Ton: 125; Net Ton: 80; Dimension: 32 x 7 x 1.25 m; Hull Material: Steel.** Prospective suppliers/bidders are required to send their Letters of Intent addressed to the Bids and Awards Committee, Bolinao, Pangasinan fax no. 075-554-2523 c/o Municipality of Bolinao with the following documents: Company Profile; Vessel Registration; Information on location and date where the equipment can be inspected.

The following are the procurement schedule:	Date
1. Submission of Letters of Intent	Not later than Feb. 23, 2004
2. Inspection period and pre-qualification of prospective bidders	Feb. 24 – March 1, 2004
3. Pre-bid conference	March 4, 2004
4. Bidding	March 8, 2004

Additional information may be obtained from the Office of the Bids and Awards Committee Secretariat (075-554-2811).

(Sgd.) **WILFREDO V. CASTELO**
Chairman

(PDI – February 12, 19 & 26, 2004)

Republika ng Pilipinas
PAMBANSANG PANGASIWAAN NG PATUBIG
(National Irrigation Administration)
PUROK BLG. VII
TANGGAPAN NG ENHENYERONG PANLALAWIGAN NG PATUBIG
(Office of the Provincial Irrigation Officer)
Sibulan, Negros Oriental
Tel. Number (035) 225-1480 • (035) 419-8541 Fax No. (035) 225-2735

INVITATION FOR PREQUALIFICATION AND BIDDING

The **NATIONAL IRRIGATION ADMINISTRATION** invites interested accredited preparers/consultants to apply for prequalification to bid and submit sealed bids to conduct/undertake the hereunder activity.

I. Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), prepare environmental Impact Statement (EIS), Engineering Geological and Geohazard Assessment Risk (EGGAR) and other corollary activities with the objective of securing Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC) for the Dauin Small Reservoir Irrigation Project (SRIP) that is located at Barangay Magsaysay, Dauin, Negros Oriental.

Prequalification forms may be secured from NIA, Sibulan, Negros Oriental upon payment of a non-refundable fee of **FIVE HUNDRED PESOS** (P 500.00) starting **February 16, 2004 to March 01, 2004**

Deadline for submission of the complete prequalification documents is on **March 08, 2004.**

Preparer/Consultants and Contractor will be notified on the results of the prequalification.

Site inspection and pre-bidding for EIA/EIS/EGGAR preparation will be on **March 30, 2004** in the morning after which Bid documents will be issued to prequalified bidders.

Shortlisted bidders concurred by Asian Development Bank (ADB) will be invited for submission of their **Technical and Financial Proposals** in two (2) separate sealed envelopes. Deadline for submission is on **April 30, 2004** at **10:30 a.m.** to the BAC, NIA, Sibulan, Negros Oriental.

Qualified firms on their technical proposals will be notified and invited for the evaluation of their financial proposal.

Evaluation will be based on ADB's Quality and Cost Base Selection System

The NIA reserves the right to reject any or all bids or parts thereof, to waive any informality therein, or to accept such bids or to award any of the above item/s to any bidder/s whose bid/s is/are considered the most advantageous to NIA and/or government.

THE BIDDING COMMITTEE
(Sgd.) **DEXTER G. PATROCINIO**
Provincial Irrigation Officer

(PDI--Feb. 16, 19, 23 & 26, 2004)

Marketing seminar for marketing practitioners

MARKETING Institute of the Philippines, the education and training arm of the Philippine Marketing Association, Inc. invites you to a seminar on "Building Blocks of Marketing A-Z, on February 17, 18 & 20, 1 to 6 p.m. at the AIM Conference Center, Benavidez cor. Trasierra Sts., Legaspi Village, Makati City.

The seminar is for those who are doing marketing management functions, but do not have marketing as academic preparation. They can be front-line, and mid-and upper-level managers in brand management, sales, customer relations, advertising, promotions, media and public relations.

Topics are: The Econometrix of Marketing; The Enigma of Marketing Mix In Today's Business Environment; Making Consumers Behave; Crucial Areas In Marketing Segmentation, Targeting And Positioning; and New Ideas In The New Millennium.

Speakers are: Ricardo C. de Vera, President, Certified International Trainor, Philippine Trade Training Center; Divina Capua, Chief Consumer Assistant & Protection Center, Department of Trade & Industry – NCR; Atty. Byron San Pedro, San Pedro, San Pedro, San Pedro Law Firm; Benjie C. Encarnacion, AVP – Market Intelligence, Nestlé Philippines, Inc.; and Marianne Quebral, Executive Director, Venture for Fund Raising.

For inquiries, please call the PMA Secretariat c/o Lydia Mariñas at tels: 634-5722; 634-4890 or Fax: 636-1451; and E-mail: pma@philonline.com or lydiamm@edsamail.com.ph

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ILOILO II ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC. (ILECO II)
Pototan, Iloilo
February 10, 2004

INVITATION TO BID

ONE LOT 69 KV CIRCUIT BREAKER WITH CURRENT TRANSFORMER, CONTROL, BATTERY AND CHARGER SCHEDULE OF OPENING OF THE BID: MARCH 3, 2004 (WED)

For complete details please contact ILECO II PBAC at tel. # 033-529-8668 or 033-529-8064. Look for Mr. Fernando Lasafin or Engr. Redmond Roquios.

(Sgd.) **Ramon P. Apura, Sr.**
Acting General Manager

(PDI--Feb. 19, 2004)

Republic of the Philippines
Local Civil Registry Office
Province of Surigao del Norte
MUNICIPALITY OF CLAVER

NOTICE FOR PUBLICATION

In compliance with Section 5 R.A. Act No. 9048, a notice is hereby served to the Public that IRENEA DE LEON ABABAO has filed with this Office a petition For change of first name from "GERMIA" MCRO record to "IRENEA", "GERMIA" OCRG copy to "IRENEA" in the Birth certificate of GERMIA B. DE LEON who was born on 23 July 1954 at Pangobilan, Brooke's Point, Palawan and whose parents are Rodolfo De Leon and Felicidad Bagona.

Any person adversely affected by said petition may file his written opposition with this Office not later than 23 February 2004.

(Sgd.) **EMMANUEL D. PAQUEO**
Municipal Civil Registrar

(PDI--Feb. 19, 2004)

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
BOARD OF INVESTMENTS
Industry and Investments Building
385 Gil J. Puyat Avenue
Makati City

Fax No. 8954024
Tel. Nos. 8976682
8901332

NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the application of KAZAFU PHILIPPINES CORPORATION with address at EPJ Building, Basak, Lapu-lapu City for registration with the Board of Investments under Book I of the Omnibus Investments Code of 1987, otherwise known as E.O. 226, as amended by Republic Act 7918, as a New Export Producer of Engineered Products (Parts and Components of Electronic Equipment) at a capacity of 4,800 Pieces/Year and with proposed plant site at EPJ Building, Basak, Lapu-lapu City has been officially accepted on November 7, 2003 and is currently being processed.

Any person with valid objections to or pertinent comments on the above-mentioned application may file his/her objection, in writing and under oath, with the BOI within one (1) week from the date of this publication.

(Sgd.) **FRANCISCO C. CHAVEZ**
Director
Project Evaluation and Registration Department

(PDI – February 19, 2004)

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ALABANG, MUNTINLUPA CITY
☎ 8424503 ☎ 8506465 Fax 8506465
e-mail address: main_classifieds@inquirer.com.ph

OBITUARIES

THE HERITAGE PARK
FORT BONIFACIO
Bayani Road, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig
(632) 845-2334 to 38 loc. 109/112
Sales@heritagepark.com.ph
Mortuary and Crematory opening soon!

ENGR. JAMES L. ROA, JR.

(September 5, 1954 to February 12, 2004)

His bereaved family: father **JIMMY H. ROA**; sisters **DRA. EVELYN ROA-IGNACIO, JANE ANDOQUE, BRENDA PADUA, VIVIAN MALUBAY, ATTY. JOY ROA, GILDA BERNARDINO**; brothers **GERARDO** and **JOSEPH**; and other relatives request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

He is survived by his loving wife **ROSARIO AUTOR-ROA** and children **DHJOANNA MAE, JAMES CHRISTOPHER** and **JOSE MA. ENRIQUE.**

His remain lie in state at No. 199 Camp Alagar Road, Lapasan, Cagayan de Oro City.

Interment will be on February 22, 2004, Sunday, after the 8:00 a.m. Mass at ORO GARDENS Memorial Park, Lumbia, Cagayan de Oro City.

"Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." Matthew 11:28

AMPARO R. MORALES

*Has joined her husband **Ben** and peacefully rests in the infinite warmth and embrace of our Lord on February 16, 2004 at the age of 82.*

Her loving children **Alberto & Rowena, Emilia & Manuel Luis, Renato & Elizabeth, Roberto**; grandchildren, great grandchildren, relatives and friends request for prayers for her eternal happiness.

Her remains lie in state at F. Paket Memorial Chapel, 13 V. Gomez St., San Roque, Marikina City.

Interment will be on February 19, 2004 at Loyola Memorial Park in Marikina immediately following the 10:00 a.m. Mass.

IN MEMORIAM AETERNA

*Beloved Husband, Dearest **Tatay** and **Lolo***

Engr. Alfredo M. Bretaña, Sr.

February 3, 1925 – February 21, 2003

The Holy Mass will be offered at the following churches this 21st day of February 2004 in commemoration of his 1st Death Anniversary

***Rancho Estate 3 Chapel**, Marikina 10:00 AM*
***Sacred Heart Church**, Kingdom of Bahrain 5:30 PM Bahrain Time Feb. 20, 2004*
***St. Anthony of Padua Parish**, Barotac Nuevo, Iloilo 6:00 AM*
***Sta. Maria Church**, Iloilo City 6:00 AM*
***Parish of Our Lady of Candles**, Jaro Metropolitan Cathedral, Jaro Iloilo City 6:00 AM*

We sincerely thank our relatives and friends who continue to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

"We will always love you Tatay"

***Marina (Nanay), Nene & Luchie, Nono, Neneng, Nonong & Ann, Inday & Eric, Nenette** and **Birdie** and Grandchildren*

REQUIESCAT IN PACE

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

Always caring...
INQUIRER OBITUARIES

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:
❶ Copy of Death Certificate
❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

WE ACCEPT CREDIT CARDS and bank-to-bank payments

Luz Constantino vda de Reyes

The Formidable Pillar
Devoted and Untiring

Wife of **Jose C. Reyes, Sr.** (†), siblings **Maria Corazon R. Alovera** (†), **Efren** and **Aurora Quitoriano**, **Carlos** and **Lilian Laurel**, **Elena** and **Teodoro Dulangon** and **Jose, Jr.** and **Nancy Valido**, sisters **Felisa Sanchez** and **Dolores Da Jose**.

Passed away in the grace of our Lord on February 17 at the age of 87. Her children, grandchildren, sisters, relatives and friends request pious readers to join them in praying for her eternal happiness in heaven.

Her body lies in state at Enriquez Funeral Homes, F. Tañedo St., Tarlac City.

Interment will be on Saturday, February 21, 2004 at 8:00 a.m. at Eternal Garden, San Sebastian, Tarlac City.

CECILIA G. NAVERA

Peacefully joined her Creator on February 13, 2004 at the age of 85.

Her bereaved family requests the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Navera's Residence in 149 Gen. Malvar Avenue, Sto. Tomas, Batangas.

Interment will be on Tuesday, 24 February 2004 at the Familia Navera Mausoleum in St. Thomas Memorial Garden after the 2:00 p.m. Mass at St. Thomas Parish Church, Sto. Tomas, Batangas.

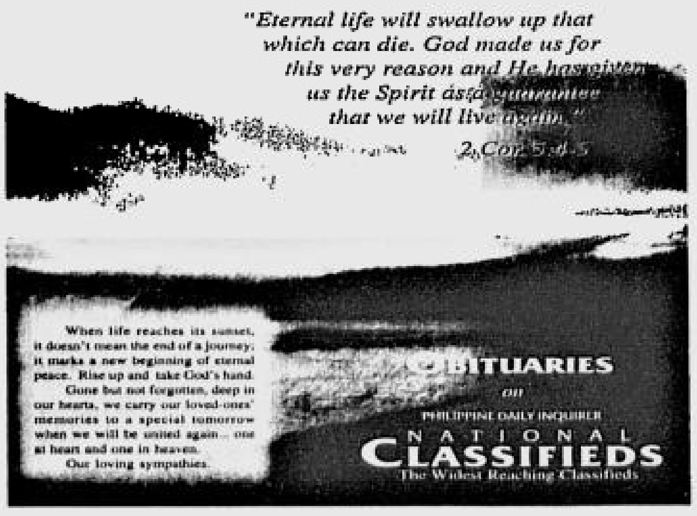
LIGAYA R. ESPIRITU

Peacefully joined her Creator on February 16, 2004 at the age of 50.

Her loving husband **DEO**; her children (†) **ROBERT, ROY, DEX** and **ICA**, and **DENG**; grandchildren **ANIKA** and **RJ**, request your prayers for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at Nacional Memorial Homes, Chapel 2-C, G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on Saturday, February 21, 2004, 2:00 p.m. at La Loma Cemetery.



"Eternal life will swallow up that which can die. God made us for this very reason and He has given us the Spirit as a guarantee that we will live again."
2 Cor. 5:4-5

When life reaches its sunset, it doesn't mean the end of a journey; it marks a new beginning of eternal peace. Rise up and take God's hand.
Gone but not forgotten, deep in our hearts, we carry our loved-ones' memories to a special tomorrow when we will be united again... one at heart and one in heaven.
Our loving sympathies.

OBITUARIES on PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER NATIONAL CLASSIFIEDS
The Widest Reaching Classifieds

The Lord has called home
our beloved nanay, tiya, lola...

GENOVEVA CLOMA VDA DE BONGOSIA

(Jan. 3, 1912 - Feb. 17, 2004)
of Panglao, Bohol

Please join her children & in-laws, **Dr. Resty & Fe Espinosa, Drs. Leandro & Arlene Bongosia, Engr. Rolly & Gilda del Rosario, Mr. Manuel Bongosia, Jr.; Mrs. Jovita vda de Bongosia, Mrs. Elsa vda de Bongosia**; grandchildren, great-grandchildren, nephews and nieces and their families in prayer for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at their residence in Panglao, Bohol.

Interment will be on Saturday, February 21, 2004 at Panglao Catholic Cemetery after the 2:00 p.m. Mass.

PABLO CARDENAS

Peacefully joined his Creator last February 15 at the age of 78; in Las Piñas, Philippines.

He is survived by his children and in laws: **Alex** and **Ruby Cardenas** and their children **Albert, Christine Joy** and **Popop**; **Bing** and **Bill Branigin, Anne** and **Mike**; **Dexter** and **Edith Cardenas, King, Mark** and **Ramon**; **Giselle** and **Jessie Tomagan, Jimbo, Jessica** and **Mariela**; **Mildred** and **Boogie Abordo, Epoy** and **James**; and **Donna** and **Raymart Abalos, Ayie** and **Migs**.

His family and loved ones request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His body lies in state at the Immaculate Parish Church Mortuary, Moonwalk Village, Talon, Las Piñas City.
Interment will be announced later.

In Loving Memory of

HERMINIO A. ASTORGA

Former Vice-Mayor of the City of Manila
Beloved Husband, Father, Grandfather and Brother
December 22, 1929 – January 19, 2004

His loving wife **Lynn Vicente**; children and children-in-law **Marivic** and Tonette Sulit, **Marife**, **Tottie** and Arlene Cerbo, **Minjun** and Pam Llamas, **Dingdong** and Myra Villasin, **Gene-Gene** and Joanne Marana, and **Lynlyn**; grandchildren Karyn, Kyle, Meg, Matthew, Tara, Alec, Olivia, Mary, Ria and Dana; sisters and brother-in-law Nene Astorga Calonsag and Beng and Popoy Legaspi, request friends and pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of the soul of our dear Herminio.

His body was laid to rest at St. John's Catholic Cemetery in Allentown, New Jersey, USA on January 22, 2004.

Memorial Masses will be held at Malate Catholic Church on February 27, 2004 at 7:00 p.m. and at Ermita Catholic Church on March 3, 2004 at 4:00 p.m.

> **"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life."**
>
> — John 3:16

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

BUSINESS

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of February 18, 2004)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	3.65	3.65	3.65	3.65	25,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	17	17	17	17	10,000
Bank of the Phil. Islands	44.5	44.5	43.5	43.5	631,100
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	38.5	38.5	38.5	38.5	129,100
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.58	0.58	0.57	0.57	340,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	26	26.5	25.5	26.5	515,600
Philippine National Bank	23.5	23.5	23.5	23.5	14,000
Phil. Savings Bank	26.5	26.5	26.5	26.5	5,600
Union Bank of the Phil.	25.5	25.5	25.5	25.5	1,800
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Manulife Financial Corp.	2025	2025	2020	2020	210
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	130	132	130	130	12,910
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1550	1555	1550	1555	1,380
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	23	23.5	23	23.25	35,200
Diversified Fin. Network	2	2	2	2	50,000
Digital Telecom Phils. Inc.	0.7	0.7	0.69	0.69	1,320,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	865	875	865	870	993,850
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.043	0.043	0.043	0.043	2,000,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	4,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	1.8	1.84	1.66	1.68	55,647,000
Transpacific Broadcast	1.36	1.36	1.36	1.36	24,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	940	945	935	940	235,920
Philweb Corp.	0.011	0.011	0.01	0.011	15,300,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	19.5	19.5	19.25	19.5	130,800
Manila Electric Co. B	31.5	32	31	31.5	834,400
Petron Corp.	3.3	3.35	3.25	3.25	3,575,000
Salcon Power Corp.	2.16	2.16	2.16	2.16	8,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.95	0.99	0.93	0.99	140,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.28	1.28	1.24	1.24	32,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	565,000
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	50,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.32	0.32	0.3	0.3	250,000
Union Cement Corp.	1.1	1.12	1.1	1.12	318,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.2	3.2	3.15	3.2	15,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	30	30	30	30	4,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	19.5	20	19.5	19.75	261,400
San Miguel Corp. A	55	55.5	54.5	55.5	96,200
San Miguel Corp. B	68.5	69	68	69	807,400
Vitarich Corp.	0.27	0.27	0.26	0.26	1,510,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala Corp.	5.9	6.1	5.8	6.1	5,817,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	48,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.021	0.024	0.021	0.024	4,100,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	20,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.61	0.61	0.58	0.58	22,260,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.17	0.175	0.17	0.175	1,860,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.235	0.235	0.235	0.235	60,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	23	23.5	23	23.5	253,400
Ionics Inc.	1.42	1.42	1.42	1.42	150,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.86	1.86	1.86	1.86	15,000
Medco Holdings	0.3	0.3	0.28	0.28	10,020,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.04	1.08	1.02	1.02	3,271,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	70,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.29	0.29	0.28	0.28	8,850,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	20,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	13.25	13.25	13.25	13.25	42,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	10,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	1.18	1.18	1.18	1.18	30,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corporation	0.47	0.49	0.47	0.49	110,000
Mondragon Intl Phils. Inc	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	170,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	23.25	23.75	23.25	23.75	345,800
PLDT (10% Pref) Series S	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series X	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Z	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,700
PLDT 10% Pref Series Aa	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	3,100
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	5.8	5.9	5.8	5.9	4,024,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	100,000
Cebu Prop. Vent B	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	50,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.205	0.21	0.205	0.21	80,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.06	1.08	1.06	1.08	2,353,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.17	0.18	0.17	0.18	1,520,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.165	0.165	0.165	0.165	50,000
SM Development Corp.	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	26,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	5.9	5.9	5.9	5.9	13,640,000
MINING					
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.225	0.225	0.22	0.22	2,910,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.29	0.29	0.28	0.28	2,800,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	50,000,000
Omico Corp.	0.0036	0.0036	0.0036	0.0036	1,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.39	0.39	0.39	0.39	220,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45	200,000
OIL					
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.003	0.003	0.003	0.003	20,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	5,000,000
Pacifica	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	4,000,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	10,000

DISCLOSURES

ALASKA Milk Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on May 25, 9 a.m. at the Shangri-La Hotel, Makati City. Stockholders of record as of March 5 will be entitled to attend and vote at the meeting.

* * *

THE BOARD of Keppel Philippines Marine Inc. approved the appointment of Miraquel Roldan as internal auditor. Agnes Barbara Lorenzo resigned as member of the company's audit committee.

* * *

FAR Eastern University will confer the degrees of Doctor of Science, honoris causa to Fe del Mundo; Doctor of Humanities, honoris causa to Fr. James Reuter S. J. and Doctor of Humanities, honoris causa to Bienvenido Tan.

* * *

VICTORIAS Milling Company Inc. moved its annual stockholders' meeting to April 2.

* * *

AYALA Land Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on March 24, 9 a.m. at the Rizal Ballroom of Makati Shangri-La Hotel. Only stockholders of record as of February 5 are entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting.

* * *

INTERPHIL Laboratories Inc. bought 37,000 of its own shares at P1.90 each.

* * *

PCI Leasing and Finance Inc. bought 74,000 of its own shares at P1.32 each.

* * *

PRYCE Gases Inc. will increase its authorized capital stock from P400 million to P4 billion to be able to implement its court-approved rehabilitation plan, in which its mother firm, Pryce Corp. will offer its real estate assets as partial payment of the former's obligations to creditors. ***Compiled by Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research***

CURRENCIES

February 18, 2004 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.778877	1.000000	56.1270
Japan	Yen	0.007374	0.009468	0.5314
United Kingdom	Pound	1.483838	1.905100	106.9275
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.100245	0.128705	7.2238
Switzerland	Franc	0.634678	0.814863	45.7358
Canada	Dollar	0.594880	0.763767	42.7358
Singapore	Dollar	0.465251	0.597336	33.5267
Australia	Dollar	0.621461	0.797894	44.7834
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.066041	2.652590	148.8819
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.207695	0.266660	14.9668
Brunei	Dollar	0.463866	0.595557	33.4268
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000093	0.000119	0.0067
Thailand	Baht	0.019971	0.025641	1.4392
UAE	Dirham	0.212060	0.272264	15.2814
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.283900	72.0615
Argentina	Peso	0.266967	0.342759	19.2380
Brazil	Real	0.267564	0.343525	19.2810
Denmark	Kroner	0.134227	0.172334	9.6726
India	Rupee	0.017220	0.022109	1.2409
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.204989	0.263186	14.7718
Mexico	New Peso	0.071424	0.091701	5.1469
New Zealand	Dollar	0.550988	0.707414	39.7050
Norway	Kroner	0.113662	0.145930	8.1906
Korea	Won	0.000673	0.000864	0.0485
Sweden	Kroner	0.108916	0.139837	7.8486
Syria	Pound	0.015130	0.019425	1.0903
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.023552	0.030239	1.6972

Heinz UFC exec . . .

From page B4

agement from the Asian Institute of Management.

Garcia, on the other hand, served as ABS-CBN's president for eight years and is now a senior management consultant to ABS-CBN.

He was the network's executive vice president and general manager since 1987.

A number of names were reportedly considered to fill in the post of president, including executive vice president Charo Santos-Concio, sales and marketing executive Nick Gabunada, and business development and special projects executive Jose Ramon "Monchet" Olives.

SM Prime unit, Megaworld buy BCDA assets

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE BASES Conversion Development Authority yesterday announced it sold P1.04 billion worth of property in Fort Bonifacio and in Camp Bago Bantay, Quezon City.

In a statement, BCDA president and chief executive Rufo Colayco said Bellevue Properties Inc., an affiliate of SM Prime Holdings Inc., bought the Quezon City lot for P695 million.

Colayco added that Megaworld Corp. bought a P286-million lot in Fort Bonifacio that was formerly owned by Vetronix.

However, another BCDA official clarified that the company would actually pay P343.3 million to cover for surcharges.

Colayco said the BCDA awarded the contracts of sale to Bellevue Properties and Megaworld Corp. since each submitted the best and most advantageous proposal.

He said the five-hectare former military camp in Bago Bantay was located behind SM City North shopping mall near Mindanao Avenue in Quezon City.

Upon the contract signing, Bellevue shelled out an upfront cash payment of P240 million. The balance will be paid in 36 monthly installments of P12.65 million.

Colayco also said Megaworld acquired the 6.68-hectare land located at the former Self-Reliance and Development Program Complex in Fort Bonifacio.

When the sale contract was signed, Megaworld made an upfront cash payment of P114 million. The balance will be paid in three equal installments of P76.4 million, or a total of P229.3 million.

According to a BCDA official, the contract provided for a surcharge since Megaworld was paying on installment. This means the company would actually pay a total of about P343.3 million.

Megaworld will develop the property mainly for residential use. However, development will have commercial and institutional components to include retail shops, schools and sports and recreational facilities.

PLDT net profit seen exceeding '03 goal of ₱10B

By Clarissa S. Batino

PHILIPPINE Long Distance Telephone Co. will release today its net income for 2003 that is expected to have substantially surpassed its P10-billion goal for the year and three times more than the P3.1 billion in 2002.

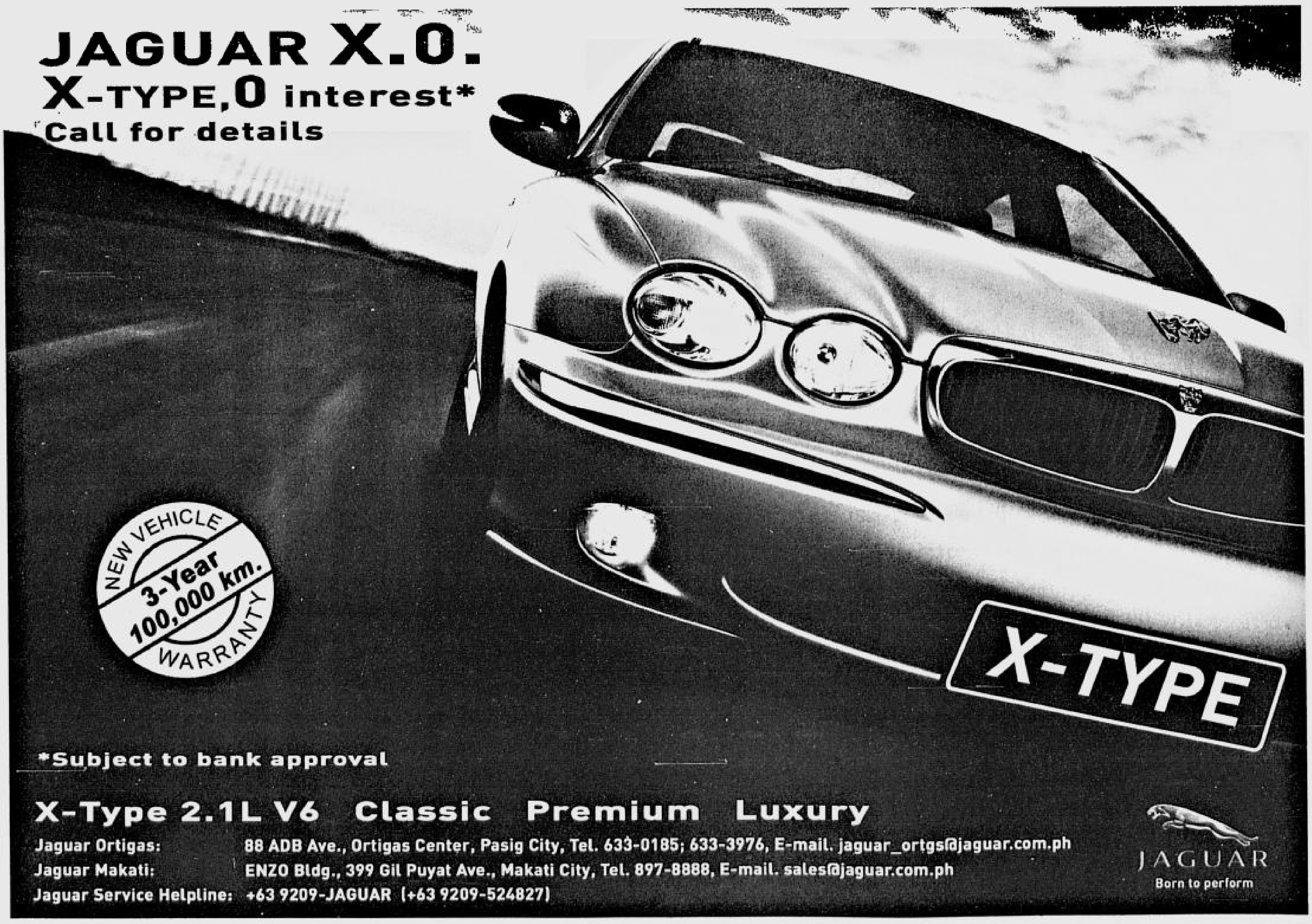
Its wholly owned subsidiary Smart Communications Inc. would also report a net profit surpassing the P16-billion mark for 2003 from P6.2 billion in 2002, according to sources.

Based on preliminary numbers yesterday, PLDT's net profit last year ranged between P10.5 billion and P10.9 billion.

"The emerging number for PLDT is about P10.6 billion while for Smart, it is more than P16 billion even after provisioning," a company official said.

Some analysts even forecast that the telecom giant's earnings hit P13 billion last year on the continued strength of its wireless business despite billions in pesos in provisioning for job cuts and certain investments. In the first three quarters, PLDT set aside P5.3 billion in provisioning for non-recurring expenses.

PLDT will also hold a board meeting today to elect Manuel V. Pangilinan as chair in place of Antonio Cojuangco, who wanted to concentrate in his new media business. Cojuangco recently bought Associated Broadcasting Corp. or ABC-5 and reportedly controls a national daily and a magazine.



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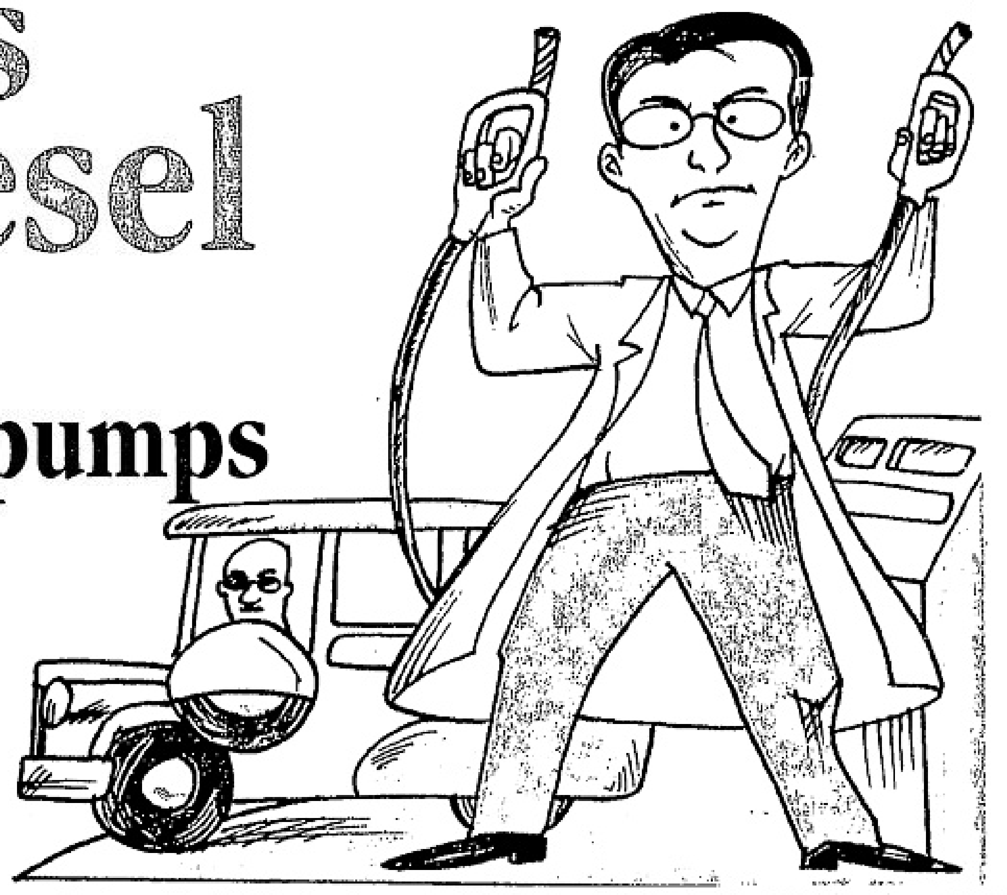
Editor **Cesar D. Mangawang**

Inventor's low-priced diesel to be carried by Flying V pumps



By Tessa R. Salazar

NECESSITY breeds invention. In these times, the escalating cost of fossil fuels has made it necessary for someone—anyone—to do something about it.

An inventor named Rudy Lantano has, and he's not just anyone in scientific circles. Lantano's Super Bunker Formula-L fuel earned him the 1996 World Intellectual Property Organization Award for most outstanding invention.

This time around, Lantano claims he has formulated the "ideal" diesel using his other patented invention: the "agitating reactor machine."

In his one-hectare plant Lan-Gas Manufacturing, an RL Alco Diesel Enterprises in Bicutan, Taguig, Lantano showed the INQUIRER his diesel fuel mixture called RL ReLoaded (not in any way borrowed from the "Matrix" movies), which he claims to be compatible with all kinds of internal combustion diesel and marine engines.

Still minimal production

Soon to undergo a test market, RL ReLoaded will have a suggested pump price of P15.28 per liter and bulk price of P14.88 per liter.

Though commercial production is minimal at the moment, Lantano says his plant can produce 2 million liters per day. While the pump price would benefit neighborhood jeepney drivers, bulk prices, adds Lantano, would benefit industrial users, including the energy sector.

The Department of Science and Technology has announced that Lantano's new fuel would be carried by his own fuel station Lan-Gas in Bicutan and at all Flying V gas stations.

Documented trials

Lantano showed documented trials of the last 10 days of testing his RL Reloaded fuel signed by the Industrial Technology Development Institute of the DOST and Manila Electric Co., among others, that showed using ReLoaded resulted in an average savings of 8.5 percent in terms of fuel consumption per hour compared to pure diesel fuel.

An analysis of the fumes conducted by a DOTC-accredited smoke emission testing center also showed that RL Reloaded passed smoke emission tests and even emitted less pollutant than market-leading diesel brands (ReLoaded's 1.07K versus 1.16K for the latter).

Oil company Twa Inc., the owner of Flying V, says Flying V has a total of 102 fuel stations in the country. The company is 100-percent Filipino owned.

P2 to P3 cheaper

The current prices of diesel fuel from the major oil players range between P17.90 and P18.20 per liter. Lantano's diesel is about P2 to P3 cheaper.

Twa chief of staff Macky Lopez says that based on the company's own tests using a truck and a pickup, 10 liters of regular diesel would usually have a mileage of 60 km, but with RL Reloaded, the same amount of fuel can last for 00 km, for a per liter mileage of 10 km.

Flying V had been testing Lantano's fuel for the past two months, and results indicate RL Reloaded emitted less smoke and pollutants; and because of its lower flashpoint, it provides the vehicle more power.

"Upon getting the required government approvals, we are ready to test market it throughout our stations in the Philippines," says Lopez.

"Conceptually, assuming that all of the standards are complied with—fuel quality, national standards and Clean Air Act, and retail station standards—then we have no problems taking a serious look and possibly encouraging (the use of the fuel)," Energy Undersecretary Jocot de Dios told the INQUIRER.

Says De Dios: "(We might) need to take a look at the sulfur content of the diesel. For diesel we have the 0.05 sulfur content requirement that took effect January of this year."

De Dios says Lantano agreed to give samples to the DOE. "Lantano has invited us to take a look at what he plans to do. One retail rule of the DOE is that there should no longer be overhead tanks. It's something we have to study given the interest of the public with respect to safety, security and environment considerations," says De Dios.

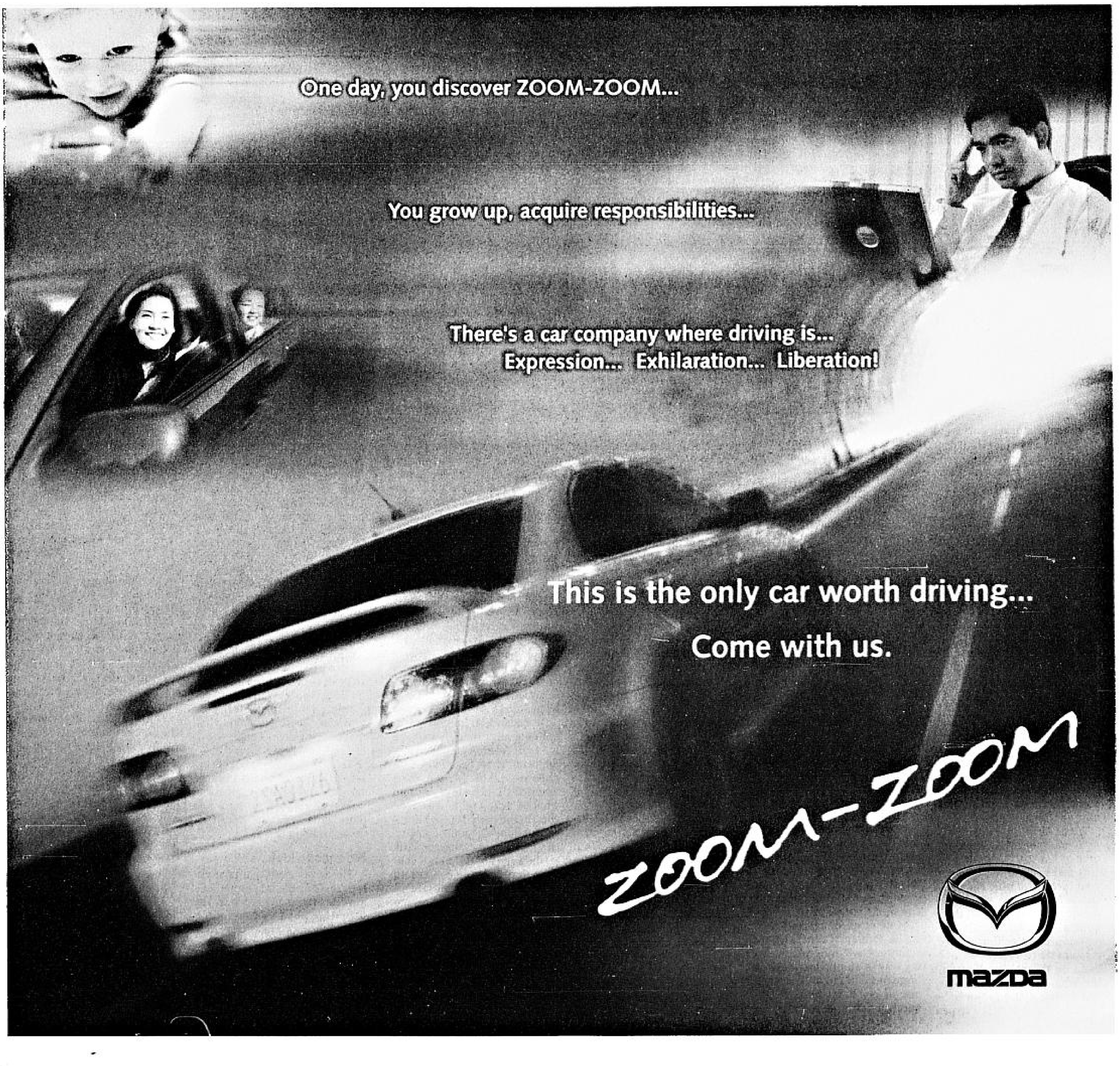
However, until Lantano's diesel is market tested, Flying V cannot just dig in and construct underground tanks instead. For now, Lantano and Flying V need to secure government approval to construct overhead tanks and a pump to add Lantano's product in its stations.

Support needed

Lopez says locally formulated fuels such as RL Reloaded should be supported, as these products could help ease the transport sector's clamor for fare hikes. He also warns that the last round of fuel price increases was only partial, and that there may be another increase coming.

Should consumers choose to try ReLoaded, they would also have to purchase a fuel filter, which Lantano also invented. Lantano assures that this filter lasts for life, and requires only a periodic washing. The filter, he adds, is compatible with conventional diesel.

INVENTOR'S/C2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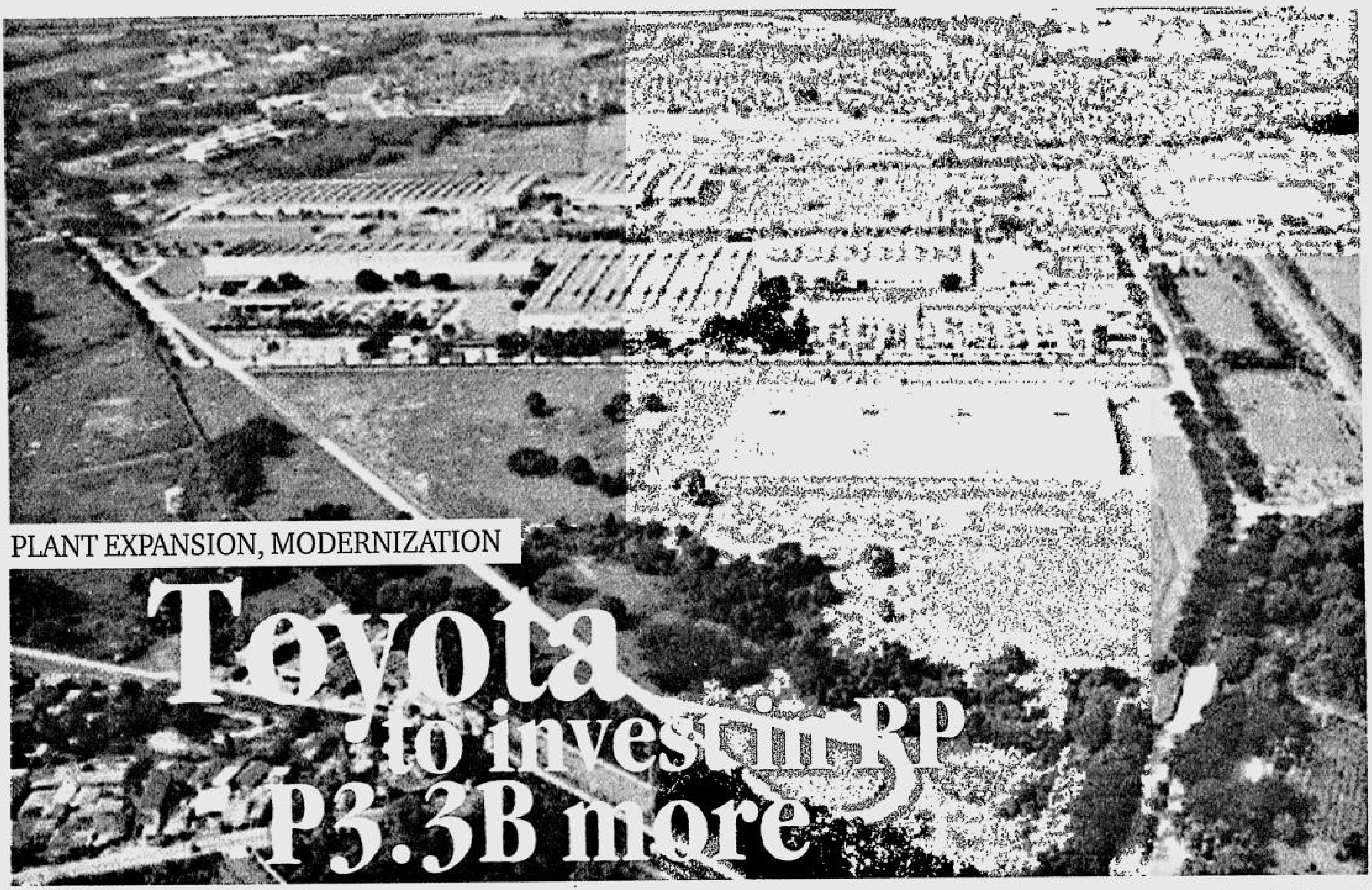


PLANT EXPANSION, MODERNIZATION

Toyota to invest in RP P3.3B more

WITH THE EXPANSION of Toyota Special Economic Zone in Sta. Rosa, Laguna, the company is now set to realize its vision to make the Philippines a major player in the global automotive industry

By Charles E. Buban

TOYOTA, the world's second largest automaker, has reaffirmed its plan to invest in the Philippines an additional P3.3 billion over the next two years.

The plan will involve the expansion and modernization of the automaker's manufacturing plants in Sta. Rosa, Laguna, to further build up its domestic market and increase its exports.

The investment will also finance the construction of a new line to assemble its Corolla Altis, Camry and Revo.

"(This is to) further solidify Toyota's partnership with the Philippines while continuing to contribute to this country's economic development," said Dr. George SK Ty, chair of Toyota Motor Philippines Corp. and Toyota Autoparts Philippines Inc. during a reception held last week at the Makati Shangri-La Hotel.

Exceeding previous investments

Toyota's planned investment will exceed the P2.92 billion it has spent on its Philippine operations in the previous years.

To date, Toyota's investments in the Philippines stand at P14.3 billion.

Toyota is currently the largest automotive company in the country with over 30 percent market share while its exports constitute about a third of the total Philippine automotive exports.

Its Sta. Rosa plants produce manual transmission, constant velocity joints and other parts, which are being exported to Japan, Thailand, Indonesia, Taiwan, India, Malaysia, Vietnam, Pakistan, South Africa, Australia and the United States.

Making RP a major global player

"The Toyota Special Economic Zone is a realization of the vision to make the Philippines a major player in the global automotive industry," said Ty.

The chair cited the growth of Toyota from its initial assembly operations in Parañaque City 15 years ago to what is today an 82-hectare Toyota Special Economic Zone in Sta. Rosa, Laguna.

On Jan. 16, President Macapagal-Arroyo, though Presidential Proclamation 525 created and designated 39,144 sq. m of land in Sta. Rosa Laguna as part of the company's Special Economic Zone.

Present during the reception to highlight Toyota's recent milestones were Trade Secretary Cesar Purisima, Philippine Economic Zone Authority Director General Lilia de Lima, Japanese Ambassador Kojiro Takano, Toyota Motor Corp. senior managing director Akio Toyoda and managing officer Shoji Ikawa.

New Autoparts president

The Toyota Group also welcomed Yasuro Takeuchi as the new Toyota Autoparts Philippines president.

He took over the position previously held by Joji Miyake who will become the general manager of Toyota's Global Production Center in Japan.

Toyoda, who formally announced Takeuchi during the reception said his new assignment will be vital as TAP is in the middle of expanding its exports capacity.

"TAP's export of high quality products to the Japanese market is a result of 10 years of technology transfer to the Philippines and in time, TAP will be fully integrated in Toyota's global network of unit parts production and distribution," Toyoda said.

$369M in exports

Last year, the Toyota Group exported $369 million (P20.7 billion) worth of products, mostly component parts and assemblies.

Established in 1990, TAP exports 95 percent of its annual output to the Asean region, Japan, and major countries of the world.

According to Ty, the Group's output will go beyond U$400 million (P22.44 billion) by 2005.

"The additional worldwide demand will be a result of Toyota Autoparts' major role in producing components for a forthcoming Toyota global strategic vehicle," he said.

As reflected in its 2010 Global Vision of becoming the world's largest automaker over the next 10 years, Toyota would be increasing its global market share from 10 to 15 percent.

Paging PNCC; escaping with Ford

FULL TANK

Al Mendoza

CAR sales were down by 5.4 percent in January?

That might be true as statistics would show. But then, I am not surprised one bit.

The first month of the year is usually a "slow" month. Meaning, people have a tendency to hang on tight to their purses as a knee jerk reaction to December, that time of year when we have this posture to really unload virtually all that we had earned the first 11 months of the year if only to lavishly celebrate Christianity's most revered occasion: Christmas. By January, our resources could be depleted, if not entirely gone.

I am pretty sure the motoring industry will stage a big rebound, if not starting February, in the coming months of 2004. With new models being unraveled this early (remember the new Honda Civic just unfurled last week), expect brisk car sales happening in the next few weeks or so.

* * *

Here's a letter from Rob Dix, a Briton. It is obvious that Dix, married to a Filipina, uses the Northern Luzon Diversion Road every now and then in pursuit of his eggs-chicks business up North. Read on.

"Dear Al:

"I read your Full Tank column of Jan. 29.

"I feel you are too lavish in your praise of the Northern Luzon Expressway, maybe because you haven't used it for quite a while.

"Admittedly, at first glance, it seems there's a big improvement on the old road, but all this is not as it appears to be, and certainly it will never be world-class as is being hyped up by the government.

"If the PNCC will control the expressway, the same old problems will remain. Trucks and buses can still be seen crawling along on the left lane. Dilapidated trucks without taillights are still allowed to travel at night.

"And where are the PNCC patrol cars? They sleep under a shady tree; at night, they are absent!

"They have increased by 27 percent the toll for a road that is not even 40 percent complete.

"Recently, a very impressive steel and concrete barrier was erected in the Pulilan-San Simon area near SFDO. Not long after, it was uprooted and no warning signs were placed to warn motorists. In fact, several pieces lying on the hard shoulder had hit vehicles. But a fence had just been erected again only recently.

"There's also this very expensive lake shore subdivision that has a giant poster of President Gloria, which is getting excessive construction work. I wonder why. Perhaps, your good friend Mr. Ping de Jesus can shed light on this?

"One other dangerous area is the Pulilan viaduct, where squatters live underneath. On my way to Manila last week, a large piece of metal destroyed one of my tires there. Fortunately, I was able to pull over to the shoulder to change the wheel but of course not a single patrol car appeared to extend a helping hand.

"Then on my way back, I saw a Pajero almost in the same spot with a burst tire; unfortunately, he was stuck in the left lane, causing a massive traffic jam. Again, there was no PNCC patrol car on the scene.

"The only thing those PNCC patrol cars are good for is standing around with useless radios in their hands and making pumping motions to traffic that is already moving after being struck in a jam for hours!

"Regards. ROB DIX."

* * *

Thank you very much, Mr. Dix.

Just one thing. That portion of your letter about you suffering a busted tire, a fate absorbed by another vehicle (Pajero) on the same spot, I find rather strange but of course not totally impossible to happen. Stranger things have happened in this weird, wild world. But whether that's a tall tale or not is not the meat of the matter. The meat of the matter is, Mr. Rob Dix isn't impressed with the construction job going on at the Northern Luzon Expressway. He's that pissed off too with PNCC and those PNCC patrol cars and it shows in his letter. Any word from PNCC?

However, let me clarify that Mr. Ping de Jesus, the man in charge of the rehabilitation of the Northern Luzon Expressway, is not my friend as Mr. Dix had alleged. I hope I am clear on that, Mr. Dix?

I wish though that Mr. Ping de Jesus were my friend so that I could tell him personally that he's doing a good job rehabilitating the Northern Luzon Expressway. Keep up the good work, Sir.

* * *

CAN'T ESCAPE FORD. The caller was Ford's Sunny Medalla, the nice and gentle fellow whom I haven't seen for years. "How about trying out our new Ford Escape?" Just like that. In no time, the shiny, Black Panther Escape was right there before my eyes. The minute I drove it, I knew it would be different. This 4x4 SUV is Super Utility Vehicle personified, what with its powerful engine, not to mention its light-as-a-feather demeanor so that once you've revved it up to cruise control, it feels like you are driving a luxury car: No shakes, no bumps, just a smooth ride all the way even on roads whose surface is occasionally dotted by craters. I have always admired Ford not only because it pioneered in building cars that shaped the mode of future cars but, more importantly, its founder—Henry Ford—did his bit in making America's highway system what it is today. It was Ford who, in the early 1900s, initiated the construction of America's freeway that aimed to link all the states of the USA. I consider that vision one of the 10 wonders of the world. Here's a glass to Henry Ford and also to Sunny M for that memorable ride. *Sa uulitin?*

* * *

QUOTE ME. The true test of a quality car is, when it's hit 10,000 km already and still, it runs as though it is still brand new.

Inventor's low-priced. . .

From page C1

"Unlike usual fuel filters that are made of paper, Lantano's filter is made of stainless steel," says Lopez.

The initial target market of RL ReLoaded would be the public transport sector—jeepneys, FXs and buses. This sector, Lopez explains, would be an easier market to penetrate. He adds that it would take more time for private owners to use and accept the new fuel.

About 50 to 75 jeepneys have been continuously loaded with RL ReLoaded in the Lan-Gas station in Bicutan for the past month.

The fuel, which feels and smells like baby oil, doesn't have that grainy consistency. The fuel can also be wiped from the hand easily.

Lantano claims his fuel also has a built-in lubricant that protects and lengthens engine life. He also claims it is environment-friendly, with low sulfur content.

"More lubricity means the pistons will run more smoothly, and that's what gives the engine power also," says Lopez.

Lantano explains that the fuel's lower flashpoint results in easier starting and higher combustion power, and also helps burn fuel more efficiently and get more mileage per liter.

No second looks

This writer made a surprise visit to the Lan-Gas station in Bicutan one afternoon last week. The patronage, as well as the appearance of the reopened station, was less than encouraging at the time. The station already offered RL ReLoaded diesel, as well as unleaded and other petroleum products. Lan-Gas did not merit second looks from motorists, particularly from private owners of newer vehicles during the entire one-hour visit.

A military-style jeep did pull in, and its owner loaded P100 worth of diesel. The driver says he was not particular of any diesel brand—he just loaded whenever and wherever it became necessary. A Hyundai Grace Van driver who had been loading Lantano's diesel fuel for the past two months sees no difference in engine performance compared to when the van was running on conventional diesel fuel.

Three drivers of tricycles parked in front of Lantano's station say they would prefer loading in the gas stations near their houses. One of them says he wouldn't load up with local fuels because he felt unsure if the fuel mix was consistent and correct.

The Lan-Gas fuel station is in front of Camp Bagong Diwa in Bicutan 500 meters from his plant. The station is also a stone's throw away from the DOST, the government's science agency supporting his inventions.

DOST officials accompanying the INQUIRER during the visit explained that most of the jeepneys using ReLoaded queued up at the Lan-Gas late at night before calling it a day, or early in the morning before making the first trip. A Lan-Gas officer also adds that most of the jeepneys using ReLoaded plied the Pasig-Bagong Bayan route. To save on loading time, these jeepneys usually make a one-time full-tank load at the Bicutan station early in the morning.

Lantano's Lan-Gas Manufacturing is currently establishing companies and tie ups in countries like Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, Germany and Mainland China. This will be managed by Singapore-based Eco-X Synergy.

PALAWEÑOS got a glimpse of the different variants of Crosswinds that Isuzu rolled out through its almost three-year existence.

Reminiscing Isuzu Crosswind's storied career in Palawan

By Charles E. Buban

AFTER BEING in the market for almost three years, Isuzu's best-selling AUV marked its storied career in a three-day fun-filled activity held recently in Palawan.

The Crosswind Evolution in Palawan paraded six Crosswinds—two brand-new ones, one each of 2002 variants XTRM, XUV and XUVi and a 2001 Crosswind XTO.

The six Crosswinds drove north of the island province toward its old capital, the town of Taytay, where the participants enjoyed its historical ruins as well as a grand stay at the Club Noah Isabelle.

These AUVs were transported to Palawan by Sulpicio Lines while Caltex provided the lubricants (Delo Sports) and the fuel (Super Diesel) needed throughout the duration of the event.

Evolution of the Crosswind

"The event was meant to show the evolution of the Crosswind from its first variant, the XTO, in 2001 and to experience its transformation into one of the most exciting crossover vehicles today," says Isuzu Philippines Corp. public relations manager Timmy Naval.

First introduced in September 2001, the Crosswind replaced the company's reliable Highlander model.

With its 2.5-liter turbo diesel engine, sanded down, curvy sporty exterior, the first Crosswind was indeed a step forward from the Highlander and an excellent option from the existing gasoline powered AUVs then in the market.

The following year, the XTRM and then later, the XUV and XUVi variants were launched to project Crosswind's image as a true sports AUV with its more sportier designs plus interior amenities previously found in sports utility vehicles.

"Today, the latest Crosswind takes the AUV image to another level," describes Naval.

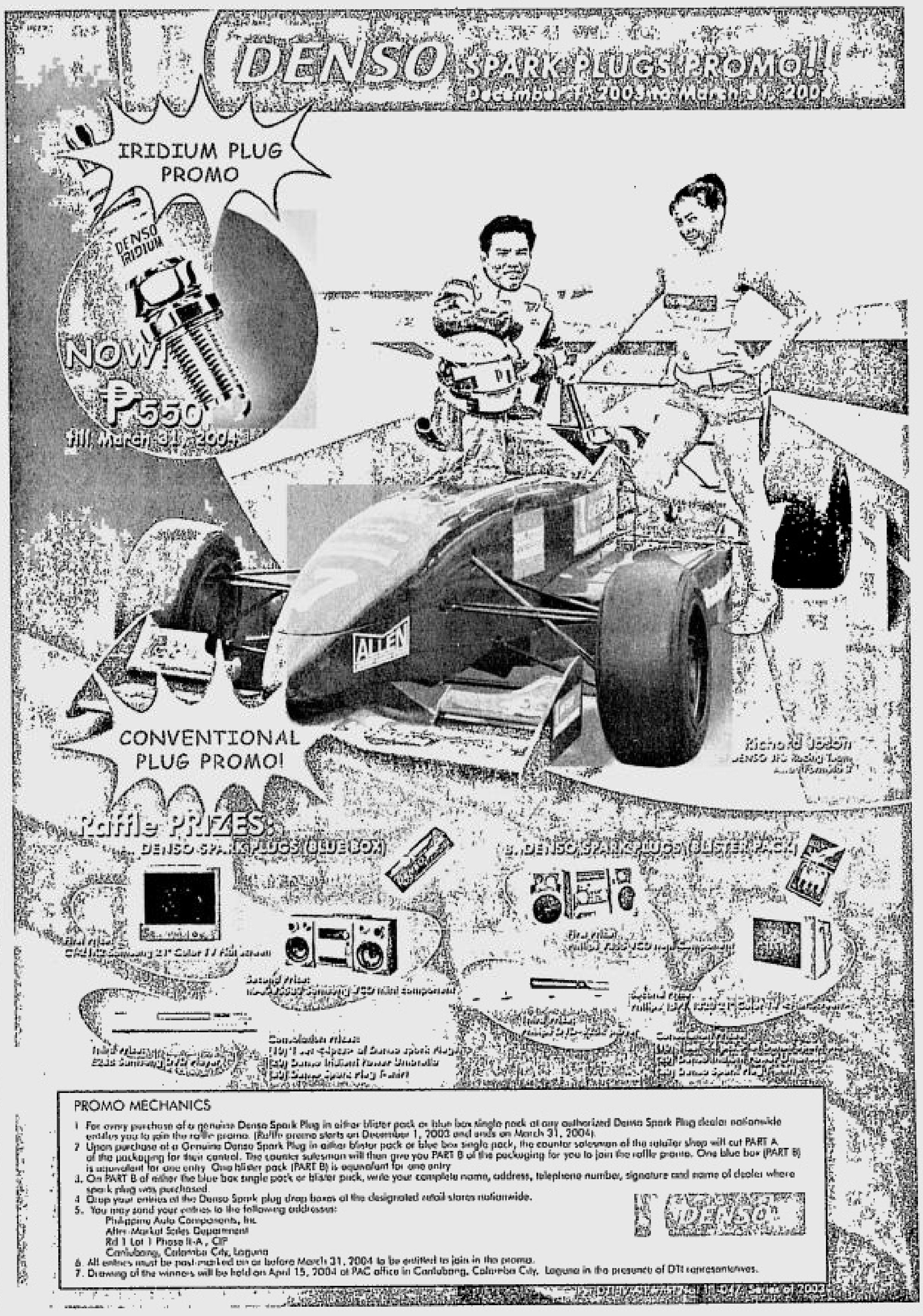
Luxurious interior

The 2004 Crosswind XUVi and XUV variants offer a first in its class back massager for the front seat passenger, a feature previously found only in luxury cars.

It also features an upscale Pioneer 6550 audio head unit while security features included a keyless entry and alarm system.

"The 2004 Isuzu Crosswind is equipped with a 2.5-liter 4-cylinder OHV direct injection turbodiesel engine, a powerful, fuel-efficient, and environment-friendly powerplant," boasts Naval.

Indeed, the Crosswind will continue to evolve and Isuzu promises to deliver even more exciting variants in the coming months and years.



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3. On PART B of either the blue box single pack or blister pack, write your complete name, address, telephone number, signature and name of dealer where spark plug was purchased.
4. Drop your entries at the Denso Spark plug drop boxes at the designated retail stores nationwide.
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   Canlubang, Calamba City, Laguna
6. All entries must be post-marked on or before March 31, 2004 to be entitled to join in the promo.
7. Drawing of the winners will be held on April 15, 2004 at PAC office in Canlubang, Calamba City, Laguna in the presence of DTI representatives.

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2.0-LITER Honda Civic i-VTEC DOHC

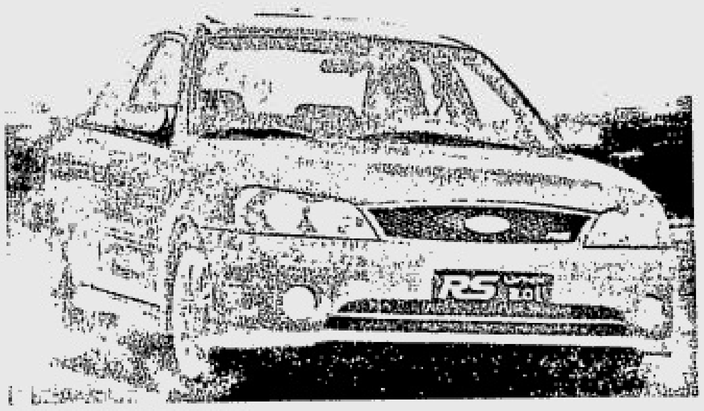
The more powerful trend

ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

IF YOU have been following the launching of new cars on the market, you may have noticed the trend toward car models fitted with bigger, more powerful engines. We are talking of mass market cars here, not premium brands like the BMW 5 and 7 Series, Mercedes-Benz, Jaguar or Volvo or exotica such as the Nissan 350Z, Maserati, Ferrari or Lancer Evo 8. The more powerful trend is a result of the revised law that bases the excise tax on market value instead of engine displacement. No longer do car buyers in the Philippines have to be content with underpowered vehicles. The big engines have arrived.

Ford Philippines started the trend in October when it introduced the 3.0-liter V6 Escape 4x4 compact SUV together with the 2.0-liter Racing Series (RS) Lynx. The 2.0-liter 4x4 Escape is still available, but as some of the motoring media noticed in 2002 after it was launched, the two-liter variant lacked the power to propel this comparatively heavy vehicle forward, fast.



2.0-LITER Ford Lynx RS

V6 Escape

Ford solved that problem by bringing in the top-of-the-line Escape that has been winning awards in the United States, the latest being the Most Wanted SUV in 2002 Edmund's.com and Best Small SUV from Car Magazine in the United States. The superior Escape's Duratec V6 DOHC 24-valve engine mated to a 4-speed automatic transmission (AT) with overdrive delivers 206 ps/6,000 rpm max horsepower and 276 Nm/4,750 max torque compared to the 2.0-liter variant's 130 ps/5,500 and 183 Nm/4,500. The V6 Escape is priced at P1,345,000 or only P75,000 more than the 2.0-liter 4x4 Escape AT.

2.0-liter Lynx RS

The 1.6-liter Lynx, which has not been selling as briskly as Ford would have wanted, got a shot in the arm with the advent of the 2.0-liter twin-cam Lynx RS. Designed for motor sport enthusiasts and people who enjoy driving fast, the low-slung, bright red Lynx RS looks and handles like a high-performance car with its 142 ps/6,000 rpm horsepower and max torque of 192 Nm/4,500 rpm anchored on sport-tuned suspension front and rear. Shod with 16-inch "V"-rated tires, the Lynx RS sells for P795,000, only P90,000 higher than the top-of-the-line (with leather seats) but tamer 1.6-liter Lynx Ghia. A Centennial Edition RS is also available for P808,000. Naturally, as befits a motoring enthusiast's car, the Lynx RS is available with manual transmission (MT) only.

2.0-liter Civic

Not to be outdone, Honda Cars Philippines Inc. unveiled last week the 2004 2.0-liter DOHC i-VTEC Civic with a 5-speed AT. The 2.0 twin cam Civic packs 155 ps/6,500 rpm max horsepower and 18.0 kg-m/5,000 rpm max torque, definitely an improvement over the 1.6-liter VTEC 3 Civic's 130 ps/6,600 rpm and 14.0 kg-m/5,000 rpm. The upgraded power and torque of the two-liter variant should put the Civic on a more competitive footing with the 1.8-liter VVT-i Toyota Corolla Altis, which was relaunched last month with new exterior and interior features. However, racing aficionados may not take the two-liter Civic too seriously since it is offered with AT only and its suspension design appears not to be as race/rally-ready as the Ford Lynx RS's fully independent trapezoidal suspension system. With prices ranging from P900,000 to P965,000, the 2.0 Civic costs more than the Lynx RS and the relaunched 1.8 Altis (P848,000 for the G model, P899,000 for the E.)

1.8-liter Sentra

Nissan Motor Philippines Inc. will join the fray by introducing, for the first time in this country, the 1.8-liter, 16-valve, 4 cyl.-in-line DOHC variant of the Sentra. The new 1.8-liter Sentra's powerplant (AT only) produces 131 ps/6,000 rpm and 16.7 kg-m/4,400 rpm max torque. Nissan will still sell the 1.6-liter and 1.3-liter variants of the Sentra. To give the Lynx RS some competition, we hope that Nissan will also market here the 175-hp, 2.5-liter Sentra SE-R Spec V with 6-speed MT, limited slip differential, sport suspension and 17-inch tires.

The latest exciting news for car buffs is that the Mazda6 sedan, which has been gathering "Best Car" and "Car of the Year" awards all over the world since its intro in 2003, has landed and more fun-to-drive Mazda cars are on the way, such as the Mazda3 and the 250-hp rotary-engine RX-8 coupé. More power to this more powerful trend!

* * *

TODAY'S BUMPER STICKER: There are two kinds of drivers, those who make dust and those who eat it.

* * *

(E-mail comments to asevilla@inquirer.com.ph.)

RPN AUTO EXTREME AUTO BYTES

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What does "DIN" in car stereo specifications stand for?

—Gerald Balingit of Pampanga

DIN is an international standard that applies to the dimensions of car audio head-units so you can easily determine if it will fit into the slot provided in your vehicle's dashboard. The initials stand for Deutsche Industrie Norm for the German standardization body. So DIN is based on the German industrial standard for radio dimensions which is approximately 7 inches wide by 2 inches high. There's also a measurement called "double DIN" which has twice the height of the standard DIN dimensions.

But to put things simply, DIN is the standard sized radio. When you go out window-shopping, you'll notice that nearly all the car stereos have the same height and width. That is a DIN radio. Then there might be a few that are 50 percent bigger than the DIN. That's what you call 1.5 DIN, or twice as big as the DIN radio, and that's a double DIN. If you didn't know about all this before and you ended up getting a single din radio with a 1.5 din opening on your vehicle, there are special brackets you can use to convert.

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195/65R15	2,236	205/65R15	2,640
205/65R15	2,361	195/60R14	2,113
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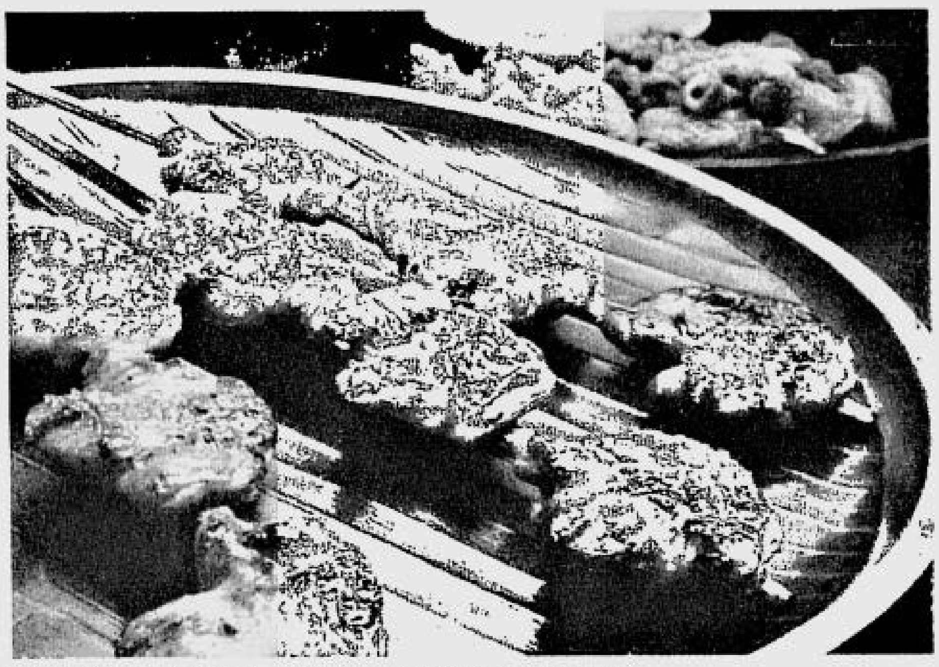
Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso

HEALTHY PICKS. Tuna Panga, Blue Marlin, Grilled Boneless Bangus and Tuna Belly



ISOL (grilled chicken tail) and Chikyninees (crispy chicken skin)

Two more places to enjoy Ilonggo food

A FAVORITE Bacolod Chicken Inasal meal—grilled chicken breast served with garlic rice with a special dipping sauce of *sinamak, toyo, calamansi* and *sili*

BACOLOD Chicken Inasal (BCI) has opened its seventh and eighth branches at Level 1 of Glorietta 4 and the third level of Eastwood Cybermall.

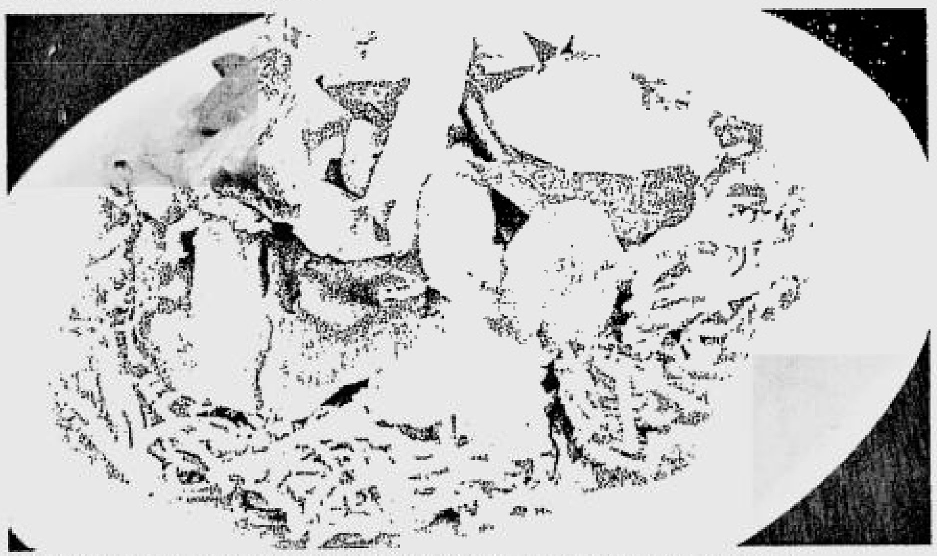
The food chain offers authentic *inasal*. Chicken pieces like *petso* (chicken breast) or *paa* (chicken thigh) are marinated in a special sauce and grilled.

Other dishes available at BCI are Pancit Efuven—fried noodles with chopsuey-like sauce; Bangus Sisig, which gives a guilt-free twist to the popular dish; Bacolod Lumpia Ubod, Chili Crablets, Tuna Belly, Blue Marlin, Bangus Lumpia, La Paz Batchoy, Molo Soup or KBL (Kadyos, Baboy, Langka), a sour broth of beans and pork popular among Ilonggos, among others.

Appetizers include Chikyninees (crispy chicken skin), Mangga Ensalada, Grilled Eggplant Salad with diced tomatoes and onions in coconut vinegar dressing, Garlic Mushrooms.

The food chain serves *merienda* like Lumpia Ubod, Dinuguan and Puto Manapla, Puto Pao, Pancit Talangka.

BCI also has branches on Jupiter Street, Makati; Greenhills Shopping Complex; Edsa Central in Mandaluyong; Quezon Memorial Circle; SM City, Sta. Mesa; and Robinsons Place Manila.



GREAT with chicken *inasal*—Pancit Efuven, fried noodles with chopsuey-like sauce

SINAMAK
Spicy Coconut Vinegar
Naturally fermented coconut
spiced with native chili and

EGGPLANT Salad, Mangga Ensalada and Atchara are ideal companions to *inasal* and grilled seafood

NAMIT GID! Danggit and Crispy Crablets dipped in special *sinamak*

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FEBRUARY 19 THURSDAY [illegible] 438-3842

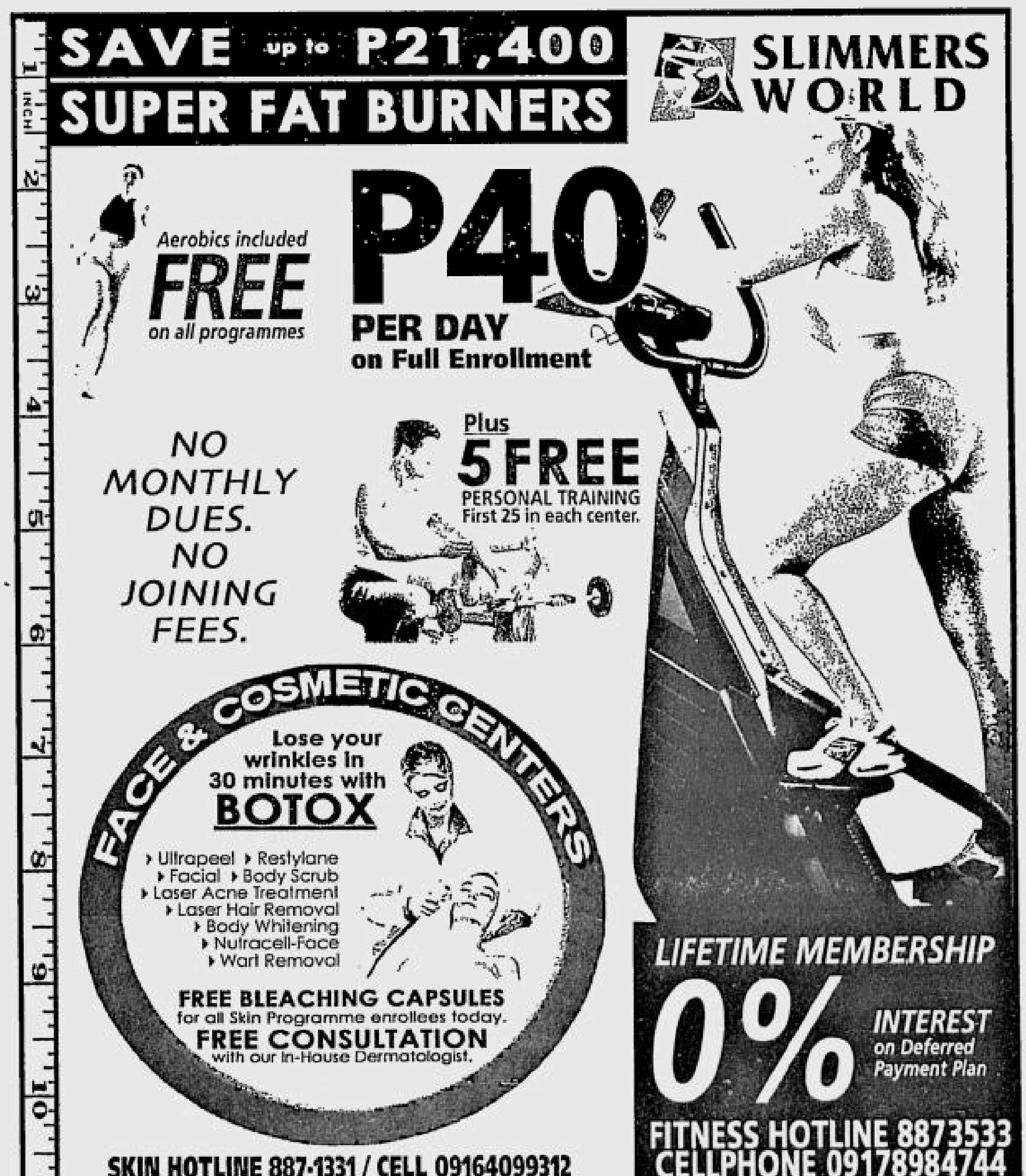
WHAT'S ON AT ROBINSONS

ANDREW E.

Check it out, check it out! The country's undisputed king of rap takes his mall tour to Robinsons this weekend. Party with the one and only Andrew E. as he dishes out the latest raps from his album. Better be there for this one.

[illegible]

ROBINSONS Malls



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SM NORTH Ruth/Mitch 929-5429
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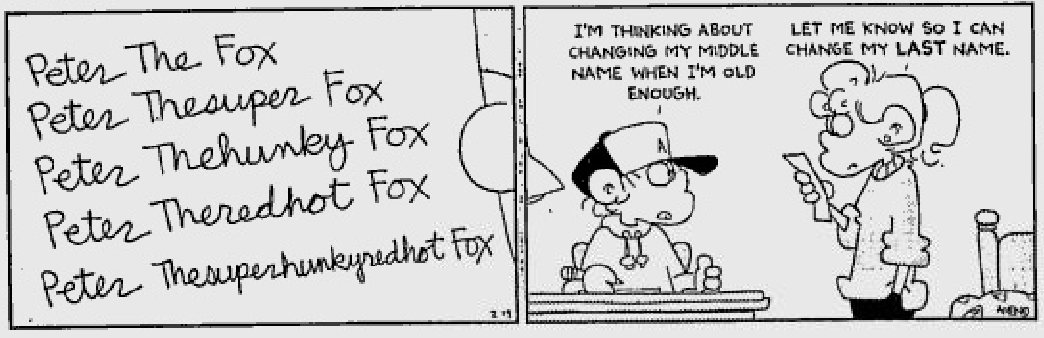
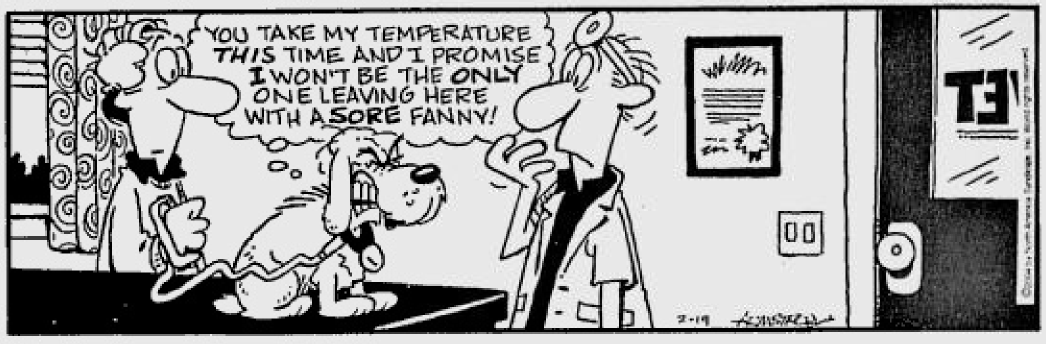
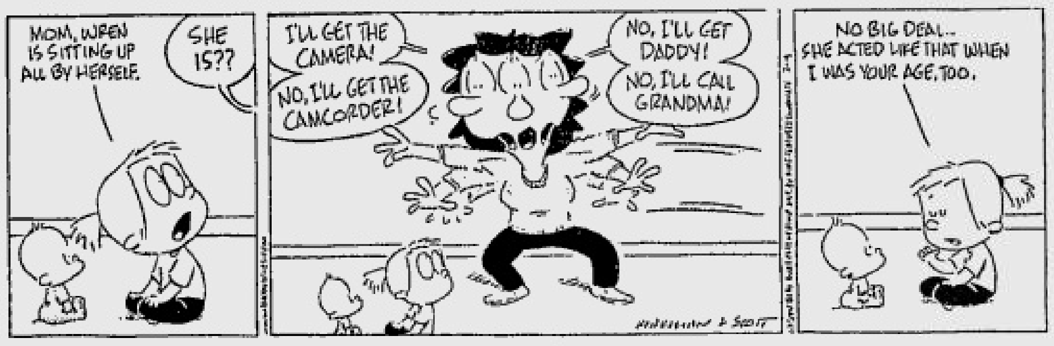
FOXTROT
BY BILL AMEND


Peter The Fox
Peter Thesuper Fox
Peter Thehunky Fox
Peter Theredhot Fox
Peter Thesuperhunkyredhot Fox
I'M THINKING ABOUT CHANGING MY MIDDLE NAME WHEN I'M OLD ENOUGH.
LET ME KNOW SO I CAN CHANGE MY LAST NAME.

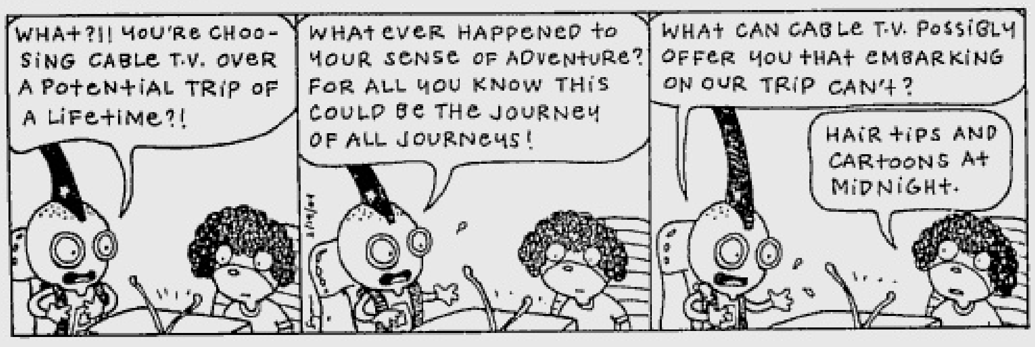
MARVIN
BY TOM ARMSTRONG


YOU TAKE MY TEMPERATURE THIS TIME AND I PROMISE I WON'T BE THE ONLY ONE LEAVING HERE WITH A SORE FANNY!

BABY BLUES
BY JERRY SCOTT


MOM, WREN IS SITTING UP ALL BY HERSELF.
SHE IS??
I'LL GET THE CAMERA!
NO, I'LL GET THE CAMCORDER!
NO, I'LL GET DADDY!
NO, I'LL CALL GRANDMA!
NO BIG DEAL... SHE ACTED LIKE THAT WHEN I WAS YOUR AGE, TOO.

ATOMO AND WEBOY
BY LYRA GARCELLANO


WHAT?!! YOU'RE CHOOSING CABLE T.V. OVER A POTENTIAL TRIP OF A LIFETIME?!
WHATEVER HAPPENED TO YOUR SENSE OF ADVENTURE? FOR ALL YOU KNOW THIS COULD BE THE JOURNEY OF ALL JOURNEYS!
WHAT CAN CABLE T.V. POSSIBLY OFFER YOU THAT EMBARKING ON OUR TRIP CAN'T?
HAIR TIPS AND CARTOONS AT MIDNIGHT.

HOROSCOPE
BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: Although outwardly you appear cavalier, you are very sensitive. You overcome obstacles because you have an indomitable spirit. You always fight for the underdog. You readily embrace any cause dear to your heart. You will make changes for the better in this world. This year, more solitude will allow you to learn something important.
Birthdate of: Jeff Daniels, actor; Benicio Del Toro, actor; Justine Bateman, actress.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19): Try to connect with friends or neighbors today. You'll enjoy social contact with others. You easily feel warm and friendly toward everyone you meet.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): In a quiet way, you feel spiritual today. You might want to explore meditation, yoga or something contemplative. This is definitely a day to stop and see the beauty of life around you.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You're willing to help a friend today. Don't hesitate to offer your help or assistance with errands . You will derive much satisfaction from your efforts.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): You might be asked to do something related to design or decorating, or making something more beautiful at work. This could be practical or frivolous. Either way, you'll enjoy doing it.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Your appreciation of beauty is heightened today. Let yourself have an opportunity to see art, nature, architecture or anything that delights your eyes and ears.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Someone is prepared to help you in a practical or financial way today. Don't be afraid to accept his or her assistance. This is an offer that comes without any strings attached. Be glad to receive this generosity.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): You are very sensitive to the needs and wants of those who are close to you today. In fact, you're also tuned in to the needs of the general public. This is an excellent day for socializing with others.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Co-workers are extremely helpful today. In turn, you're prepared to help others. This give and take makes your work enjoyable and productive!

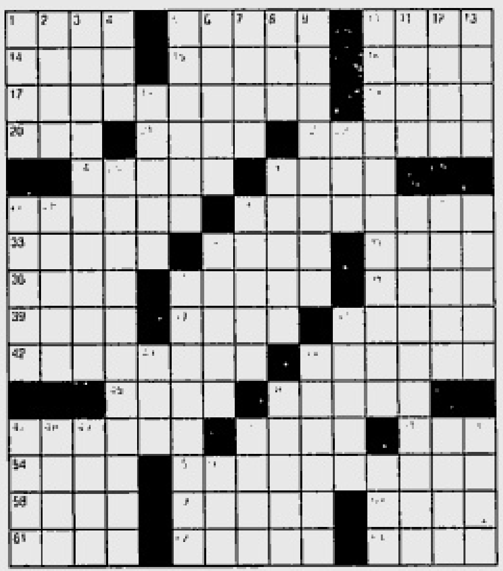
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Some of you might fall in love today. Fantasies can come true today. Enjoy artistic, creative activities.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): You might feel extremely close to a family member today. You're willing to put the needs of others before your own. You feel your own life is enriched because you care for someone.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Today might be spent in daydreams and fantasies. That's OK. It's a pleasant, dreamy fog. We all need to space out like this sometimes.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You're definitely tempted to spend money on pretty things and luxurious items today. Objects of art, jewelry, beautiful clothing as well as rich food appeal to you now.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Roger Jurgovan
Potomac, MD

2/19/04

ACROSS
1 Injure severely
5 Oodles
10 Debatable
14 __ mater
15 Wading bird
16 Pond growth
17 This puzzle's theme question
19 DEA officer
20 Understand
21 On the waves
22 Hedge shrub
24 Buenos __, Arg.
26 ERA or RBI
27 Lunatics
29 Jazz tenor saxophonist
33 Grace closings
34 First-rate
35 Rat tail?
36 Start again from scratch
37 Works hard
38 Q-V connection
39 Lie next to
40 Dawber and Tillis
41 Snappy one
42 Bartenders
44 Risky to fence
45 Throat-clearing sound
46 Lacking freshness
47 Remained
50 Normandy town
51 "Ulalume" author
54 Proceed to the runway
55 Starbucks employee's reply to 17A
58 Press
59 Broadcast
60 Needle case
61 Pealed
62 Decade parts
63 Hey, over here!

DOWN
1 Clump
2 Balm ingredient
3 Elevator operator's reply to 17A
4 Chairman of China
5 Reduce
6 Gives the eye to
7 Diva's song
8 Dict. entry
9 Sanfords on the original British TV series
10 SWAT team member's reply to 17A
11 Patron saint of Norway
12 Grimm beast
13 Diplomacy
18 Goods
23 Snitch
25 CIA agent's reply to 17A
26 Melodies
27 Salin of tennis
28 One-celled organism
29 Goes fast
30 Miner's reply to 17A
31 San __, CA
32 Australia's __ Stony Desert
34 Warning
37 Indy 500 location
41 Spring sound?
43 Common article
44 Stairway components
46 Spud
47 Commotion
48 Fictional plantation
49 Neuron transmitter
50 Irene of "Fame"
52 Burden
53 Perfect prose
56 Hop to it!
57 Corded fabric

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

C	R	I	E	D	■	M	E	N	D	■	J	A	D	E
H	E	N	R	Y	■	A	L	E	E	■	A	V	I	S
A	T	H	I	N	G	O	F	T	H	E	P	A	S	T
T	S	U	N	A	M	I	■	■	O	V	E	R	D	O
H	I	M	■	M	A	S	C	A	R	A	■	I	A	N
A	N	A	■	I	N	T	E	R	N	■	C	C	I	I
M	A	N	E	T	■	S	O	M	E	■	L	E	N	A
■	■	■	L	E	O	■	■	■	D	N	A	■	■	■
D	A	T	A	■	O	M	A	N	■	A	P	A	C	E
O	M	E	N	■	L	A	W	Y	E	R	■	S	L	R
O	N	S	■	I	O	Y	E	M	I	L	■	S	O	N
D	E	T	O	U	R	■	■	P	R	O	F	U	S	E
A	S	I	G	N	O	F	T	H	E	T	I	M	E	S
D	I	N	E	■	S	O	R	A	■	I	D	E	S	T
S	A	G	E	■	O	R	E	L	■	C	O	S	T	S

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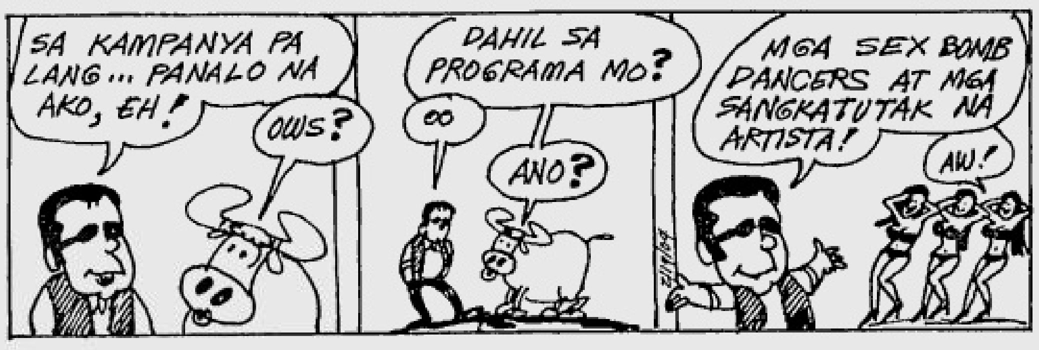
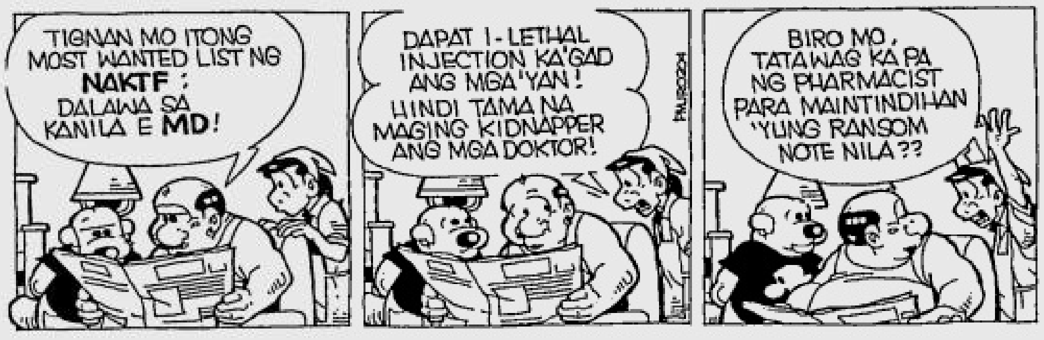
2/19/04

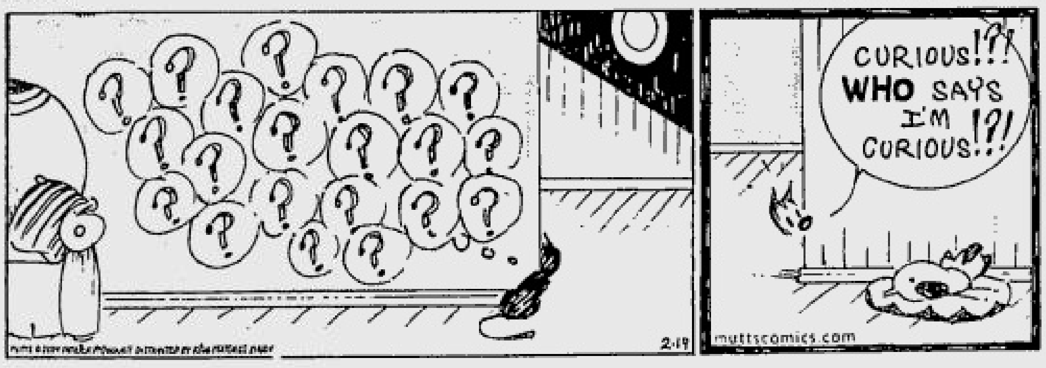
A. LIPIN
BY JESS ABRERA


SA KAMPANYA PA LANG... PANALO NA AKO, EH!
OWS?
DAHIL SA PROGRAMA MO?
OO
ANO?
MGA SEX BOMB DANCERS AT MGA SANGKATUTAK NA ARTISTA!
AW!

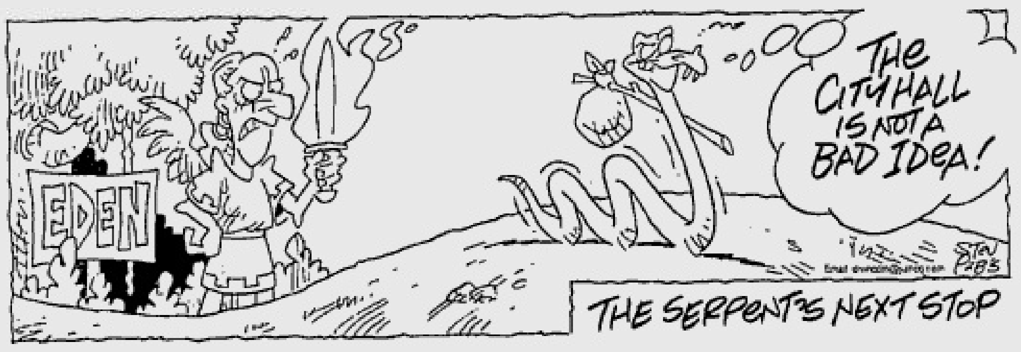
PUGAD BABOY
BY P.M. JUNIOR


TIGNAN MO ITONG MOST WANTED LIST NG NAKTF: DALAWA SA KANILA E MD!
DAPAT I-LETHAL INJECTION KA'GAD ANG MGA 'YAN! HINDI TAMA NA MAGING KIDNAPPER ANG MGA DOKTOR!
BIRO MO, TATAWAG KA PA NG PHARMACIST PARA MAINTINDIHAN 'YUNG RANSOM NOTE NILA??

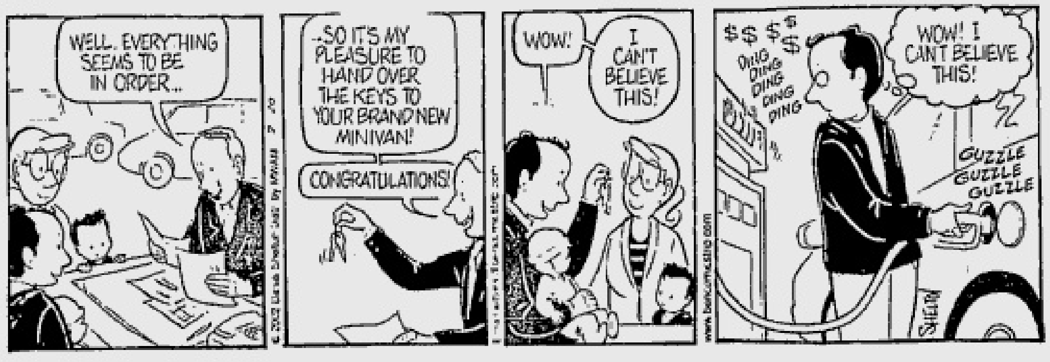
MUTTS
BY PATRICK McDONNELL


CURIOUS!?! WHO SAYS I'M CURIOUS!?!
mutts comics.com
2-19

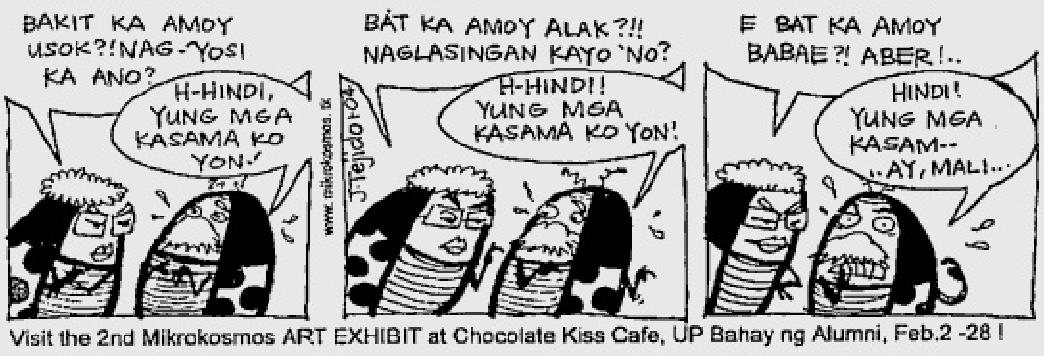
DIVINE COMEDY
BY STEVEN PABALINAS


EDEN
THE CITY HALL IS NOT A BAD IDEA!
THE SERPENT'S NEXT STOP

BEN
BY DANIEL SHELTON

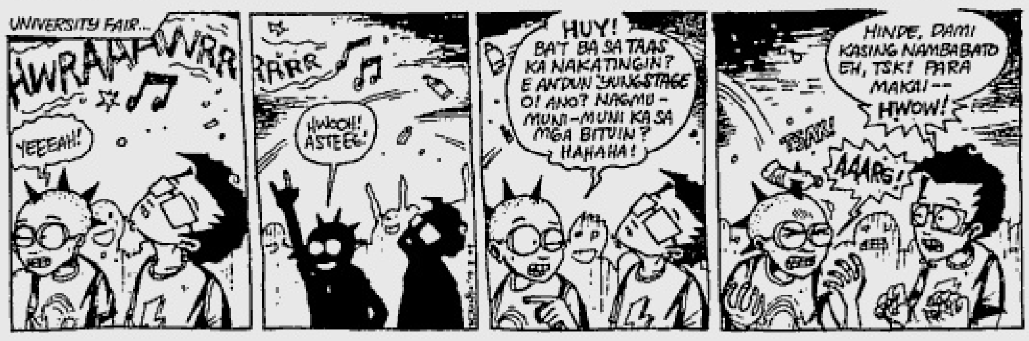

WELL, EVERYTHING SEEMS TO BE IN ORDER...
...SO IT'S MY PLEASURE TO HAND OVER THE KEYS TO YOUR BRAND NEW MINIVAN!
CONGRATULATIONS!
WOW!
I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS!
$$ $$
DING DING DING DING DING
WOW! I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS!
GUZZLE GUZZLE GUZZLE

MIKROKOSMOS
BY JOMIKE TEJIDO

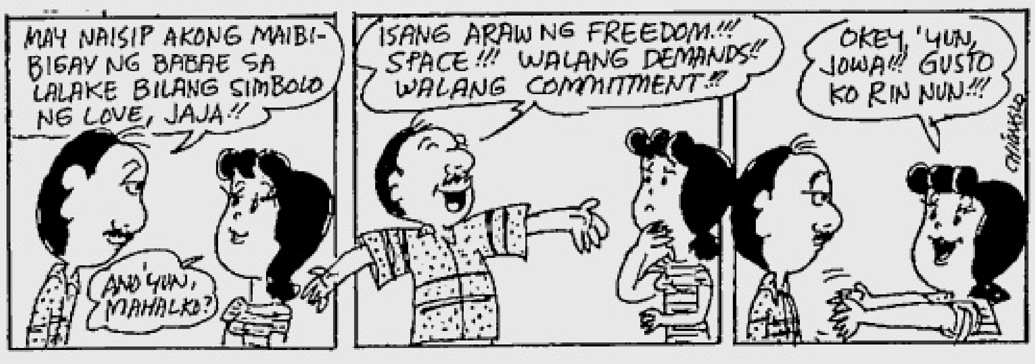

BAKIT KA AMOY USOK?! NAG-YOSI KA ANO?
H-HINDI, YUNG MGA KASAMA KO YON.
BÁT KA AMOY ALAK?!! NAGLASINGAN KAYO 'NO?
H-HINDI! YUNG MGA KASAMA KO YON!
E BAT KA AMOY BABAE?! ABER!..
HINDI! YUNG MGA KASAM-- ..AY, MALI...
www.mikrokosmos.tk
J. Tejido '04

Visit the 2nd Mikrokosmos ART EXHIBIT at Chocolate Kiss Cafe, UP Bahay ng Alumni, Feb.2 -28 !

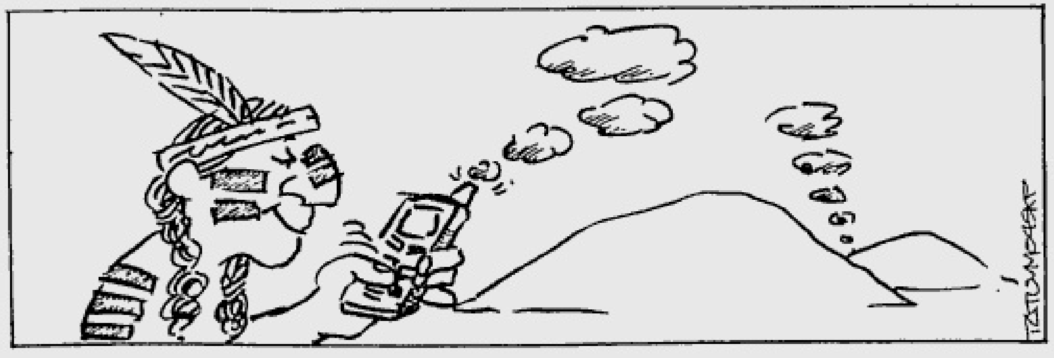
KIKO MACHINE
BY MANIX ABRERA

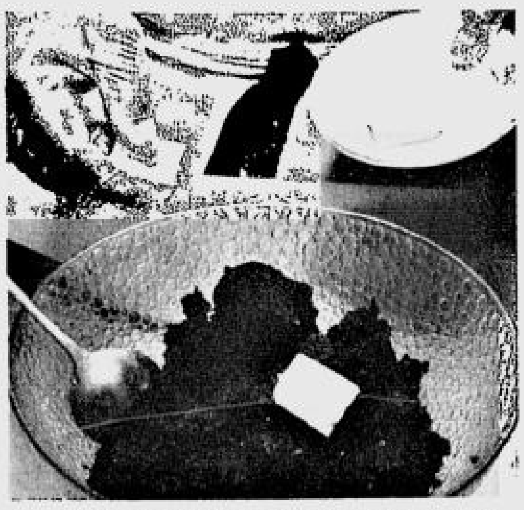

UNIVERSITY FAIR...
HWRAAAWRR
YEEEAH!
RRRR
HWOOH! ASTEEG!
HUY! BA'T BA SA TAAS KA NAKATINGIN? E ANDUN 'YUNG STAGE O! ANO? NAGMUMUNI-MUNI KA SA MGA BITUIN? HAHAHA!
HINDE, DAMI KASING NAMBABATO EH, TSK! PARA MAKAI-- HWOW!
TSAK!
AAARG!

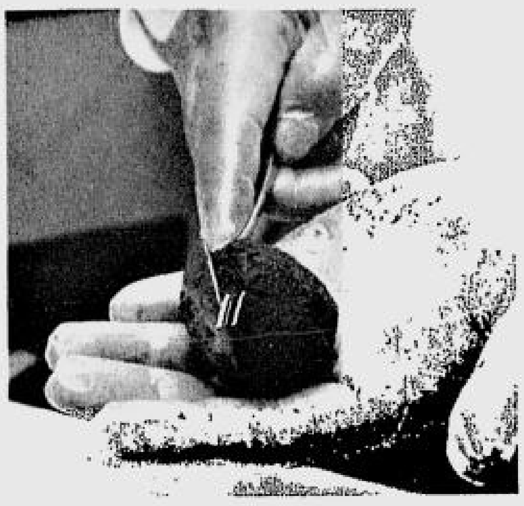
LOVEKNOTS
BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

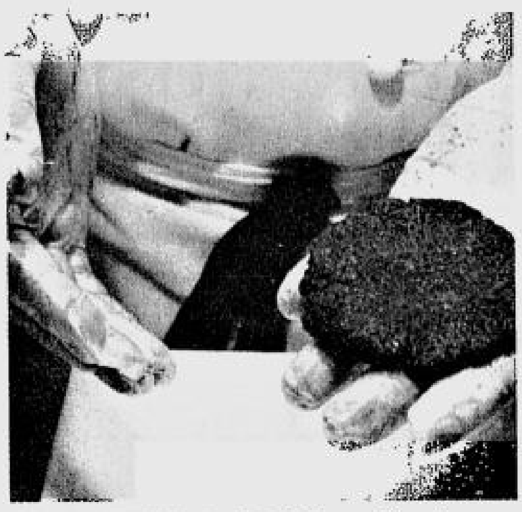

MAY NAISIP AKONG MAIBIBIGAY NG BABAE SA LALAKE BILANG SIMBOLO NG LOVE, JAJA!!
ANO 'YUN, MAHAL KO?
ISANG ARAW NG FREEDOM!!! SPACE!!! WALANG DEMANDS!! WALANG COMMITMENT!!!
OKEY, 'YUN, JOWA!! GUSTO KO RIN NUN!!!
CHIONGLO

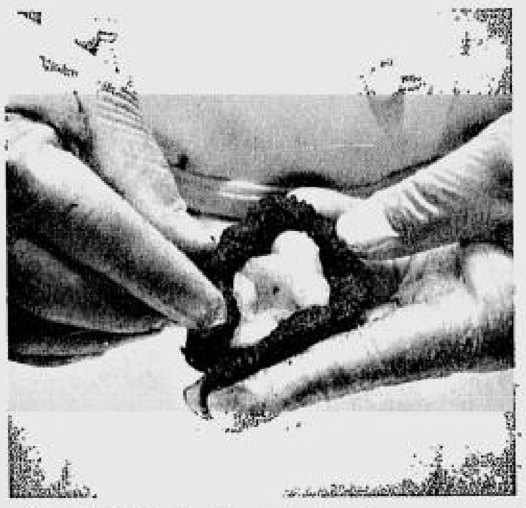
TULDOK
BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING

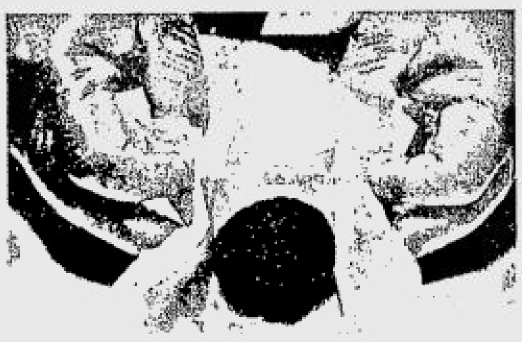


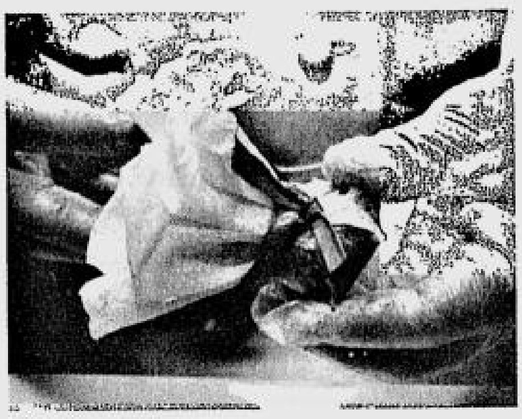

1 **TO** make grated *ube*, mix together in a bowl *ube*, butter, fresh cream and sugar and cook in low heat until sticky. Let it cool for a while.

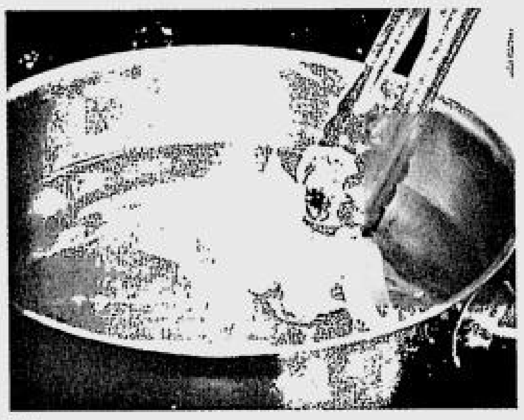

2 **SCOOP** grated *ube* and make a ball in the palm of your hand.

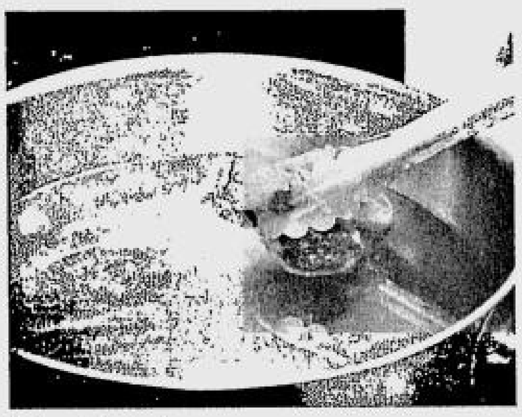

3 **FLATTEN** the ball. Add chopped *langka*.


4 **CLOSE** and roll into a ball again.

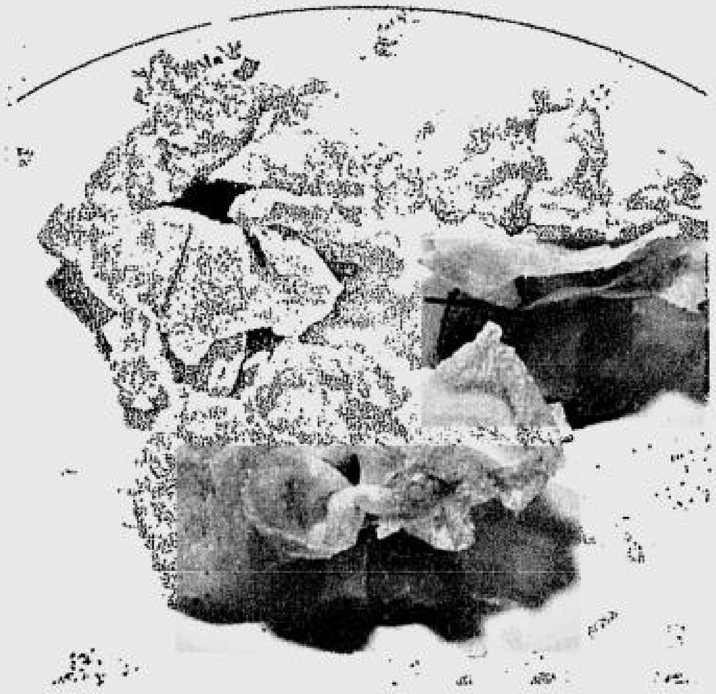

5 **PLACE** *ube* in the center of the *lumpia* wrapper. Fold up the wrapper and crumple to form a shape resembling a pouch. Repeat with the other wrappers.


6 **TIE** with banana leaf.


7 **DEEP** fry lumpiang *ube*, dipping the top part first.


8 **DIP** the bottom part.

Jazzed up 'halayang ube'


PRITONG Ube at Langka na may Mango Sauce

Text by Vangie Baga-Reyes
Photos by Roger Carpio

IN the mood for something sweet and elegant? Filipinos have a broad range of delightful desserts that can satisfy any person with a sweet tooth. Most are quick and easy to make and really delicious.

But if you don't want the hassle of baking, you might want to simply take already prepared *halayang ube* a step further. Try a deep-fried dessert, such as crisp little pouches of purple yam with jackfruit filling and drizzled with mango sauce, Pritong Ube at Langka na may Mango Sauce.

Specially whipped up by Dusit Hotel Nikko pastry chef Demetrio Peñaflor for their Filipino food Fiesta San Miguel outlet (tel. 8673333), the *pritong ube at langka* dessert, which has a subtly sweet flavor and smooth texture, can also be served as an afternoon snack with a nice hot cup of tea or coffee. It's also best served with vanilla ice cream on the side.

Chef Peñaflor says you can use ready-made *halayang ube* in bottle or container or make your own (which is soooo tedious). The *ube* is then enriched with cream, butter and sugar. It is cooked gently in low fire then made into balls stuffed with *langka*.

The mango puree can be prepared by combining two medium-sized mangoes and sugar. The combination is then processed in a blender until a rough puree is made.

STEP BY STEP

Ingredients

Grated *ube*
Lumpia wrappers
Banana leaves, cut lengthwise
Langka, chopped
2 tbsp mango puree (optional)
To make grated *ube*:
450g *ube*
200g butter
150 g fresh cream
100g sugar

For suggestions, e-mail author at vbaga@inquirer.com.ph

9 **ARRANGE** nicely on a platter with mango sauce.

'Fighting neighbors' in your ref

YOU may not be keeping produce fresh by mindlessly putting them inside the refrigerator. Some fruits and vegetables may not make good neighbors and, by putting them together, you cause them to spoil faster instead of keeping them fresh.

This is because some fruits and vegetables contain ethylene gas, a naturally occurring ripening substance causing some produce to ripen and decay. Some ethylene producers are avocados, bananas, kiwi, mangoes, papayas, peaches, pears and tomatoes.

When placed near items that produce ethylene, fruits and vegetables sensitive to the gas become bitter and soft, lose their color or develop spots. Ethylene-sensitive produce include apples, asparagus, carrots, broccoli, cucumbers, eggplant, green beans, lettuce and greens, potatoes and watermelon.

To protect things, segregate and put different produce separately in durable Glad Zipper Storage Bags. Made of the FreshProtect plastic film, the bags keep fruits and vegetables fresh longer. The FreshProtect technology allows "good" gasses in and "bad" gasses out.

The Glad bags also have a yellow-and-blue-make-green freshness lock ensuring that they are tightly sealed to keep germs away.

Fish classics for meatless Friday

By Dorothy MJ Ferreria
Contributor

WITH Ash Wednesday fast approaching, we are looking for exciting fish and vegetable recipes we can prepare for meatless Fridays of the Lenten season. Here we have Paella de Mariscos, Creamy Hot Fish Salad and Pan-grilled Fish Steaks a la Pobre.

Paella de Mariscos

¼ c olive oil or vegetable oil
¼ c minced garlic
1 ½ c diced onions
6 pcs prawns or large shrimps
½ kg clams or mussels
¼ kg squid, cleaned and sliced into rings
1 c diced green bell pepper
2 c long grain rice, washed
2 tsp paprika
2 tsp salt
½ tsp coarsely ground black pepper
1 c white wine (vino blanco)
227-g can tomato sauce
2 c water
1 c frozen green peas
1 c string beans cut into 1 ½-inch lengths
2 pcs red bell pepper, broiled, peeled and cut into thin strips
½ c pitted black or green olives, cut in half
peeled and quartered hard-cooked eggs for garnishing

Heat up olive oil in a large frying pan. Stir in garlic, onions, seafood and bell pepper. Mix well. As soon as onions are limp add washed rice, seasonings, one cup of white wine and tomato sauce. Mix well. Wait for the rice mixture to absorb most of the liquid, and then add water. Allow to boil.

Transfer everything to a rice cooker. Test the rice for doneness. If the rice is not yet tender, add ½ cup of water to the mixture and cook for a few minutes more. As soon as the rice is done, stir in peas, green beans, broiled peppers and olives. Mix well, cover and let stand for 10 minutes. Transfer to a serving platter and garnish with eggs.

Creamy Hot Fish Salad

½ kg fish fillet (*lapulapu* or *labahita*)
¼ c gin
salt and pepper to taste
all-purpose flour
beaten egg
breadcrumbs
oil for frying
Dressing:
½ c full-cream condensed milk
2/3 c real mayonnaise
¼ c coarsely chopped walnuts or cashew
1 ripe mango, peeled, skinned and cubed

Slice the fish into bite size pieces. Wash well, drain and marinate in gin for at least 15 minutes. Drain for five minutes.

Dredge each piece in flour, dip in beaten egg and roll in breadcrumbs.

Heat up some oil in a frying pan over medium heat. Fry the breaded fish pieces until light golden brown. Drain the cooked fish in paper-lined plates.

In another large frying pan, pour in the mayonnaise and the condensed milk. Mix well. Place over medium low heat. Stir with a wooden spoon until it boils. Quickly stir in the mangoes, walnuts and fried fish. Transfer the mixture to a serving platter and serve immediately.

Pan-grilled Fish Steaks a la Pobre

500 g fish steaks (*tanigue*, blue marlin or *gindara*)
Marinade:
2 tbsp cherry brandy or dark rum
1 tbsp white sugar
1 tbsp pounded garlic
¼ c soy sauce
1 tsp dried rosemary leaves
¼ tsp coarsely ground black pepper
2 tbsp olive oil
2 tbsp butter
Gravy:
2 tbsp butter
2 tbsp all-purpose flour
marinade plus enough water to total 1 ½ cups liquid
Topping:
bottled fried garlic

Wash the fish steaks in cold running water and pat dry with paper towels. Set aside. Combine the ingredients needed for the marinade in a mixing bowl. Add the fish steaks and let stand for 20 minutes. Drain the fish and reserve the marinade for later use.

Heat the olive oil and butter in a grill pan over medium heat. A regular frying pan may also be used. Add the fish steaks and cook to desired doneness.

To prepare the gravy, melt the butter in a saucepan over medium heat. Add the flour and mix well. Pour in the liquid and continue to cook over medium heat until it thickens to the desired consistency.

When ready to serve, top each fish steak with an adequate amount of gravy. Sprinkle some fried garlic over the gravy and serve immediately. May be served with rice or buttered vegetables.

Dorothy MJ Ferreria offers cooking, baking and cake decorating classes at Dorothy's Cooking School in Quezon City and in key provincial cities. Call 7217735 or e-mail dorothyferreria@skyinet.net.

	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
MONDAY	French toast with ham and cheese filling Hotcake syrup or fruit jam Coffee, hot chocolate or iced tea Bananas with cottage cheese	Chicken *mami* soup Stir fried *kangkong* with garlic *Tokwa at baboy* Rice Egg pie	*Pata* with pork and beans and chorizo Rice Fresh pineapple
TUESDAY	Scrambled egg with onions and mushrooms *Pandesal* Coffee, hot chocolate or fruit juice	*Sarciadong mayamaya* Vegetable chopsuey Rice Chilled star apple	*Pancit canton* Fried porkchop Rice *Hopia*
WEDNESDAY	Croissants Pan-grilled ham or Vienna sausage Butter, fruit jam Cheese platter Coffee, hot chocolate or iced tea	Chicken *adobo* *Gisadong sitaw* Rice Melon a la mode	Cream of mushroom soup Beef steak Buttered vegetables Rice Mango cheesecake
THURSDAY	Oatmeal with sliced bananas and cinnamon *Pandesal* Cheese pimiento spread Coffee, hot chocolate or carrot juice	Steamed *tilapia* with ginger stuffing Beef with *ampalaya* and *tausi* Rice Fresh fruit platter	Spaghetti with meatballs Garlic bread Mocha ice cream with homemade coffee jelly bits
FRIDAY	Spanish sardines Slices of cheddar cheese or *kesong puti* loaf bread coffee/hot chocolate/ papaya shake	Clear soup Coleslaw Pan-grilled fish steaks a la Pobre Rice Canned lychees with crushed ice	Cream of asparagus soup Caesar salad Paella de mariscos Leche flan
SATURDAY	Garlic rice *Longganiza* Fried eggs Coffee, hot chocolate or iced tea Bananas	*Sinampalukang manok* Beef *tapa* Rice *Canonigo*	Crispy *pata* Vegetable *karekare* Rice Fresh fruit platter
SUNDAY	Assorted *kakanin* Hot coffee, hot chocolate or ginger brew Fresh fruit platter	*Sotanghon guisado* Pork barbecue Fried *saba a la mode*	Creamy hot fish salad Steamed chicken with ginger sauce Rice Almond jelly

Private hospitals overpricing medicines?

THE CONSUMER

Marietta Velasco Giron

TALK to patients about overpriced medicines in hospitals, and it's like poking a beehive. We happened to be in the waiting room of a hospital recently, and heard a patient complain about the overpricing of medicine and supplies. A man shared his experience and, in no time, the entire room was abuzz with gripes from other irate people comparing prices and cursing profiteering hospitals.

One patient complained about a drugstore in front of a charity hospital, ironically named after a patron saint of the poor. "That drugstore charged me P5 more per antibiotic compared to Mercury. I went to Mercury, bought my medicine, and only paid P8 extra for the jeepney fare," he related.

An outpatient's grievance was about the sky-high price of medicine supplied by a hospital during his recent confinement. Another one shared information that a private hospital was charging 50 percent more for cotton, gauze and swab.

Architect R. L. Fernandez complained in his e-mail about the price of medicine at the hospital where his uncle, a senior citizen with a kidney transplant, was confined recently. Fernandez recalled, "The medicine that was given to my uncle, amphoteracin B, cost almost 60-percent less at Mercury. It was the same brand."

Fernandez also commented on our recent column about the refusal of private hospitals to honor the senior citizen's privilege discount. "I called the telephone number you wrote in your column to inquire from St. Luke's Medical Center if I could get a rebate for the medicine administered to my uncle. I was told that even though your article on the subject came out, the policy of SLMC has not changed when it comes to giving discounts on medicines. When I asked if I could buy the medicine outside the hospital, they replied that I could not because it might be fake medicine."

> One patient paid 50 percent more for medical supplies

Evidently there is no law that regulates the prices of drugs and medical supplies in private hospitals. If such a law exists, the biggest hospitals in the country will probably hesitate to raise the prices of items in their own pharmacies or prohibit patients from buying medicines from other sources.

As architect Fernandez pointed out, "Not all the people who go to these big private hospitals are wealthy; some of them have no choice but to go there simply because their doctors are there."

Pesky messengers

Some messengers can spoil your day, indeed. As one consumer wrote to us, "There's a messenger who presses my doorbell as if it's a matter of life and death, and he doesn't stop raising hell until someone responds to his summons. Then there's another messenger who screams my name even before he gets to the door. Instead of using the doorbell, he chooses to yell. Messengers do this even if there's a huge mailbox right outside my door. I don't know why they don't just put whatever it is they are delivering in the mailbox (which they do anyway if their royal summons are ignored) without annoying the whole neighborhood."

Feedback

From sheremodo@my.smart.com: "Please give the Philtranco bus company a wake-up call. Their (buses) are often late (by) 1-2 hours."

R. Mendoza wrote: "I am one of the people who invested in Multitel. Since the arrest of Rose Baladjay, we have not heard any news on the progress of the case, [or] if it is progressing at all. Should we still hope that our money will be returned? Our primary concern now is to recover our investment, never mind the due interest. We also fear that our money will be used by some politician in the coming election. I am hoping that you, or someone, can give us an update on the Multitel case."

Jackie of kemistrii@yahoo.com bought her father a pair of top-brand slippers in a shopping mall in Pasay City. The price was down to P1,017, from the original of over P1,500. She was dismayed and embarrassed, however, when she learned from her father that the strap of one slipper came off barely three days after use. "The chances of getting my money back, or getting a replacement, are nil. All I can do is prevent future inconveniences—and embarrassment—by avoiding this brand."

On spam and cyberfraud

From Angelino S. Venus, technical support of Tridel Technologies (agnelo@tridel.net): "Spam or unwanted mail has been a problem over the Internet for the longest time, even with popular free e-mail services like Yahoo and Hotmail. Once the e-mail address is found to be active by 'spammers,' unwanted mail will start filling our mailboxes. Unwanted mail can come from people we know, that is why it is really hard to totally stop it.

"Internet Manila is currently evaluating anti-spam (systems) to help us minimize the volume of spam. We will inform our subscribers through bulletin message or service update when they are implemented. In the meantime, subscribers may use Message Rules, if they're using MS Outlook Express, or Mail Filters for Eudora users. If we can be of help, e-mail us or call 6345140 to 43 local 1009-1012."

From "Online Crooks," an article of journalist Henrylito Tacio (tacio@mozcom.com): "Studies show that less than 10 percent of Internet crime is reported because embarrassed victims are reluctant to come forward.

"Philip McKee, assistant director for Internet Fraud Watch (IFW) at the National Fraud Information Center, Washington D.C., says people are scammed online in record numbers. In 1996, there were 1,000 incidents of Internet fraud in the United States and Canada. Last year, complaints soared to over 10,000, with online shopping having doubled and making cyberfraud, involving goods for sale, the No. 1 complaint received by IFW."

Send consumer complaints and comments to giron@mailstation.net

T.G.I. FRIDAY'S offers new treats like Southwestern Chicken Caesar Salad, BBQ Chicken Salad, BBQ Beef Sandwich, Tossed Tomato-Basil Chicken, Pan-Sautéed Chicken and Garlic, BBQ Roasted Chicken, Pepperjack Stuffed Fish, Red and White Strawberry Shortcake and Double Chocolate Fudgy Brownie. T.G.I. Friday's branches are located at Glorietta 3, Robinsons Place Manila, Alabang Town Center, Hotel Rembrandt in Quezon City, and Brickroad of Sta. Lucia East.

DINING OUT

Buffet of tempting Italian treats

EDSA Shangri-La's Paparazzi offers an Italian lunch buffet of smoked salmon, tiger prawns with bacon, duck breast carpaccio with citrus salad, squid with capponata, bruschetta with eggplant and cheese, shrimps on parsley salad, four cheese pizza, roast beef or salmon carvery. The buffet also features a pasta station with a choice of Italian sauces like olive oil and pesto, boscaiola, carbonara and cream of spinach. Call 6347373/ 6338888.

OUTBACK Restaurant presents the Rib Fest special. There are three options: Ribs Entrée, Ribs and Grilled Chicken Combination and Pork Chop and Ribs Combination. All three are served with baked rice and steamed vegetables. Rib Fest is ongoing every day at Glorietta 4, Makati City; Libis, QC; and Alabang Town Center.

CENTURY Park Hotel's Café in the Park features salmon recipes until Feb. 29. The promo offers Beetroot Marinated Salmon and Pomelo Salad, Crispy Mango and Salmon Rolls, Head in Shaohsing Flavored Broth, Double-Boiled Salmon Belly with Maroni Noodles and Seaweed, Salmon Medallion on Ratatouille with Saffron Basil Cream, Wood Smoked Salmon Fillet served with Black Paella Rice and Crab Roe Coulis, Salmon in Papillote served with Fragrant Rice and Braised Red Cabbage. Call 5288888.

WESTIN Philippine Plaza's Café Plaza holds a Korean Food Festival until Feb. 29. Featured are Ginseng Salad, Seaweed Soup, Braised Beef Rib Kalbee, Stir Fried Baby Octopus, Persimmon Punch, Korean Pancakes and Beef Rib Eye. Diners have a chance to win a free trip to Seoul, Korea, with accommodations for two. Call 5515555.

ICHIZEN Japanese Food and Café serves makimono, sushi, sashimi, teriyaki, teppanyaki, ramen and crepes. Ichizen is located at the corner of San Rafael and Legarda Sts., Quiapo, Manila and in SM Bacoor, Cavite.

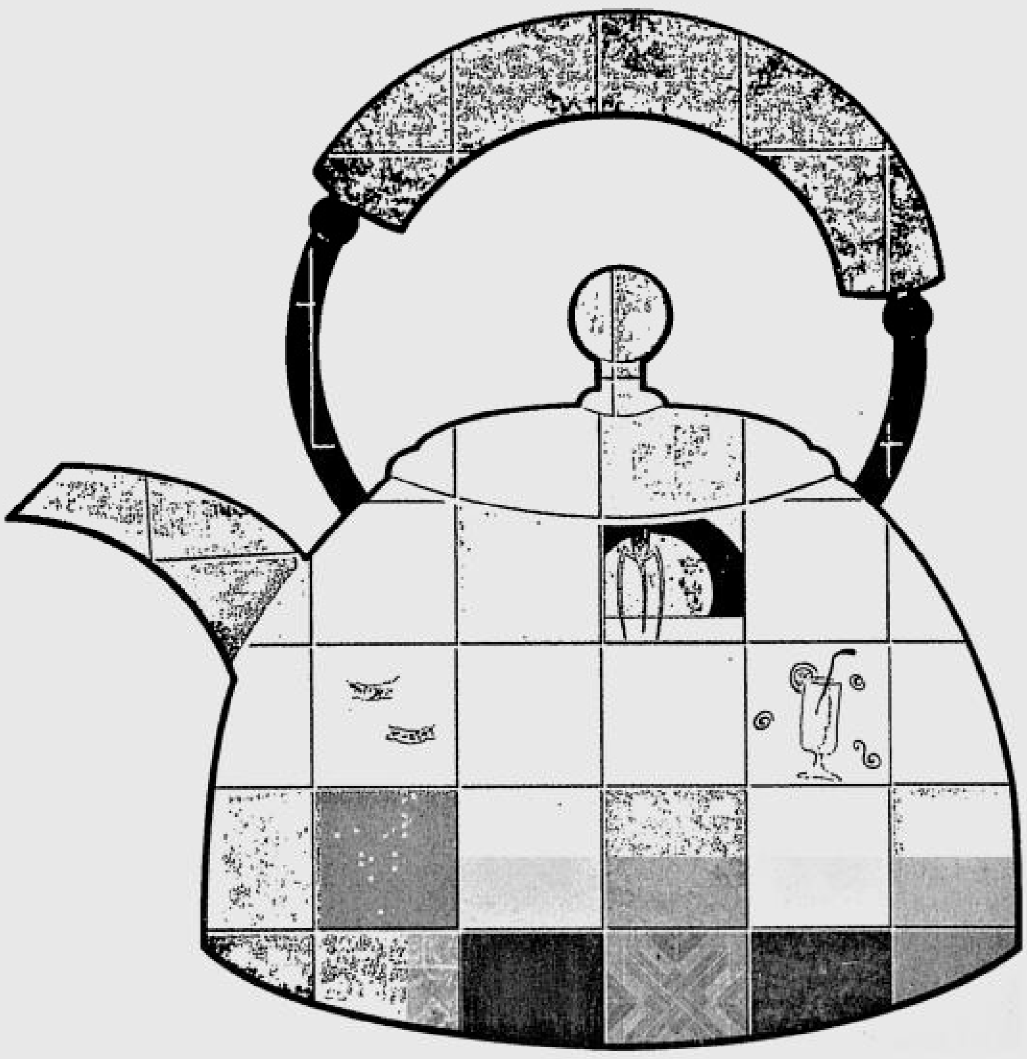
BINALOT is now open at Food Choices, 3/L, Glorietta 4, Ayala Center, Makati. Its freshly cooked toppings include Anytime Inihaw na Baboy, Pork Bongga Longganisa and No Bones Daing na Bangus with salted eggs and tomatoes. Binalot's other branches are at Shangri-La Plaza, SM Megamall, Robinson's Galleria, SM Makati and MRT Ayala Station.

DENCIO'S at Megamall's Megastrip offers Sisig, Crispy Pata, Sari-Saring Sinugba, Adobong Kangkong, Kare-Kare, Buffalo Chicken and Buffalo Squid Fritters, Dalandan Freeze and Four Seasons. Call 6374409.

DAVID'S Teahouse at Virra Mall, Greenhills, offers Chinese and Japanese dishes. On display in wooden boxes are at least 50 different kinds of Japanese meals.

FAST LUNCH AT P49

Enjoy the latest Greenwich promo at only P49—lunches served fast 11 a.m.-2 p.m., Monday-Friday only. FastBreak choice no. 1: two pieces Wacky Wings with Java rice, two pieces baked potato wedges and regular softdrink. FastBreak choice no. 2: Spaghetti with Garlic Stix, two slices solo Hawaiian Pizza and regular softdrink.



Hot designs for your kitchen.

For your kitchen, living room, bathroom and everywhere else, get the tiles that make your house a home.

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